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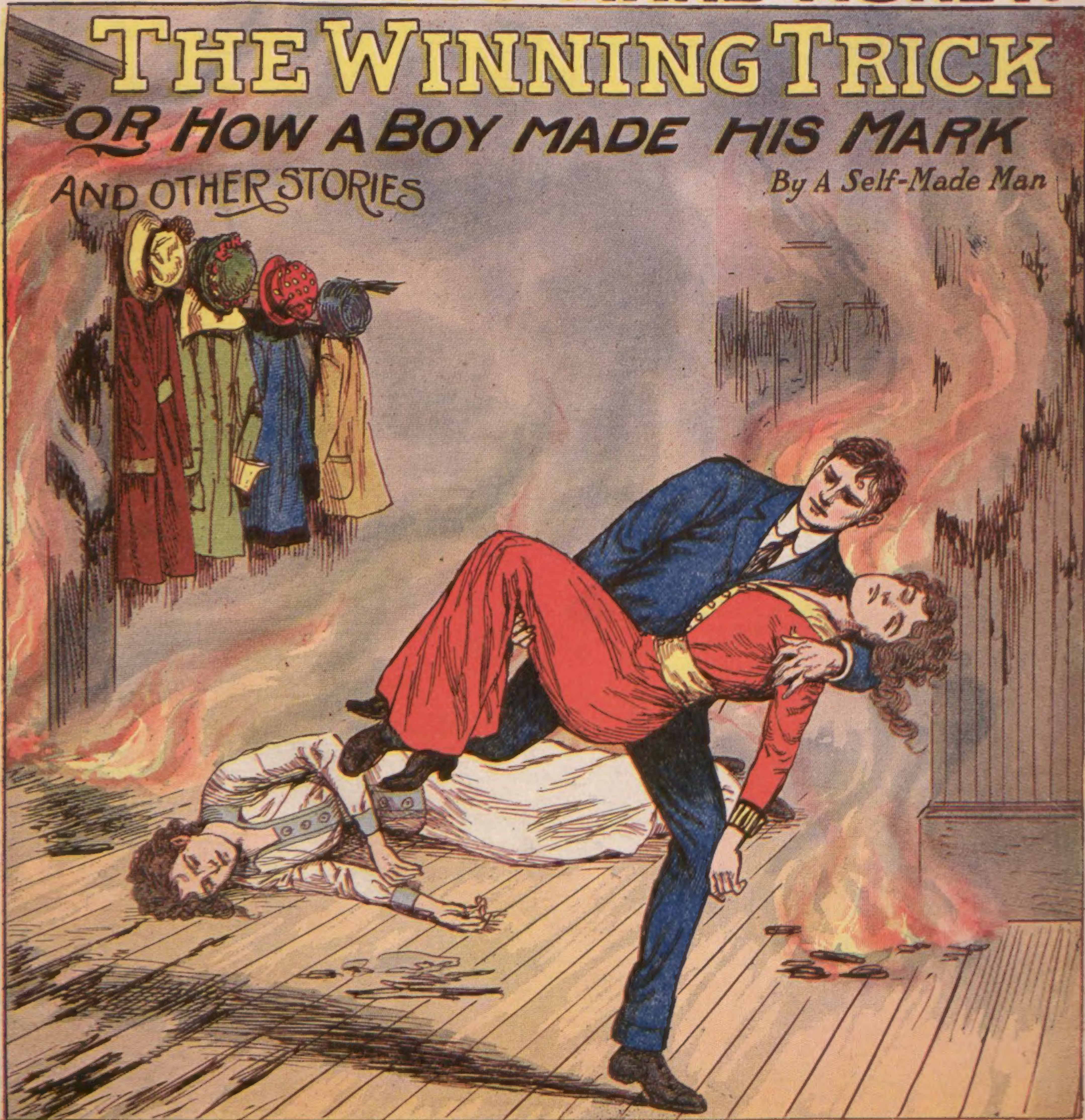
# FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF  
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

## THE WINNING TRICK OR HOW A BOY MADE HIS MARK

AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



He beat out the fire and carried her forward a short distance toward safety. Alternately he worked the senseless girls toward the end of the long room, with the flames now in control of the floor, reaching out hungrily after him.



The boy in the overalls and jumper had seen Lewis Jarvis grab Jessie Fairweather by the wrist, and easily overheard all that followed.

His natural chivalry toward the fair sex told him it was time to interfere, even without reference to the fact that he looked upon the girl as a particular friend.

So he dropped the wheelbarrow, stepped up to the son of Northport's magnate, and laying his hand on his shoulders, said, with quiet determination:

"I think you had better let Miss Fairweather go home if she wants to."

Lewis started back in some little trepidation, for he knew he was in the wrong, and Jessie took advantage of the moment to snatch her hand from his grasp.

But when he recognized who it was that had interfered his brow grew as black as thunder-gust, and he snorted:

"What do you mean, you pauper, you! How dare you lay your dirty hand on me!"

"I interfered because you were annoying Miss Fairweather," said the newcomer in straightforward tones, and he raised his soft felt hat politely to the girl.

"You common fireman! I've got a good mind to——"

He doubled up his fists in a threatening manner, but the calm, undaunted look which the other gave him convinced Lewis that discretion was the better part of valor.

"How dare you butt in where you're not wanted?"

"If you can convince me that I was in the wrong, I am willing to apologize," said the working lad, with a genial smile.

"You were not in the wrong, Will Somers," spoke up Jessie Fairweather, quickly. "Mr. Jarvis was acting in a very rude way to me, and I am very much obliged to you for coming to my aid."

"You hear that, Lewis Jarvis?" said Will, grimly. "What have you to say for yourself?"

"None of your business what I have to say! But I'll tell you one thing, smart aleck, I'll get square with you for this."

"All right," responded Somers, cheerfully. "I think, however, you owe Miss Fairweather an apology for your conduct toward her."

"If you don't get down on your knees right now and beg my pardon for sticking your nose into my affairs, I'll see that you're discharged to-morrow from your job in the factory engine-room," threatened Jarvis, hotly.

"Much obliged for your kind intention, Lewis Jarvis," returned Will Somers, disdainfully; "but when I get down on my knees to you, just let me know, will you?"

"Bah! you common laborer!" cried the squire's son in a rage. "My father is one of the owners of this mill. He's only got to say the word to have you fired. I'll see that he does it," he added, vindictively.

"Your father isn't the only stockholder, nor the biggest one, Lewis Jarvis," retorted Will, calmly. "I may be a common mechanic, as you say, but I understand my business here and attend to it, so I don't think the superintendent will discharge me without sufficient reason. Simply to oblige you isn't any reason at all."

"You'll see," replied Jarvis, darkly, moving off without paying any further attention to Jessie Fairweather, who had not taken advantage of this controversy to continue on her way, but stood by, hoping her presence would prevent a serious mix-up between the two boys.

Maybe there was another reason, too, for it was a fact that Jessie greatly admired young Will Somers.

She knew he was a good boy, an earnest, hard worker, the sole support of a widowed mother and a younger brother and sister.

She knew that everybody that knew Will liked him, because he was polite and gentlemanly to all, and considerate of the feelings of even the smallest girl or boy in the factory.

She knew that a considerable part of his spare time was spent in study, in order to better his condition. He had an eye to the future.

Will Somers was generally recognized about the mills as a smart boy.

He had lately invented an improvement in the damper regulator of the engine, which had proved an economizer of coal, and a patent for it had been applied for in his name by the superintendent, who, in recognition of its benefit in the engine-room, had given him a welcome increase in salary.

He was now at work on another scheme, designed to recover and utilize a larger percentage of the wasted steam.

This was a project that engaged the attention of many of the brightest minds in the engineering line at that very mo-

ment, for it was known that by far the greater proportion of the units of the mist formed by condensed vapor, otherwise known as steam, went to waste; consequently any invention which would serve to utilize a larger number of those infinitesimal particles would prove of untold value in economizing the coal consumption.

As Lewis Jarvis turned on his heel and strode away, his small mind brooding upon the retaliation he hoped to be able to inflict on the boy who had dared to cross him, Jessie walked up to Will, and holding out her hand, said:

"I hope you will understand that I am very grateful to you for what you did for me, and I trust you will not get into any trouble over it."

"Don't worry about that, Jessie; I'm not afraid of anything Lewis Jarvis can do with such a lame excuse to work upon. I am very glad I was able to be of service to you, for there is no girl I would sooner——"

"And then he stopped in embarrassment.

"Thank you," she answered, with just the suspicion of a blush. "Isn't it most time for you to go home?"

"Yes; if you wouldn't mind waiting a few minutes I'll be happy to escort you home," he said, eagerly.

"I'll wait, for it's getting quite dark now, and I should be glad to have you with me."

Five minutes later they left the yard of the engine-house together.

## CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH LEWIS JARVIS, HAVING FAILED TO GET SQUARE WITH WILL SOMERS, DECIDES TO EVEN UP THINGS WITH JESSIE FAIRWEATHER.

Superintendent Harper of the Northport Cotton Mills was in his office on the morning following the affair mentioned in the previous chapter, when Squire Jarvis walked in unannounced.

"Good-morning, Mr. Harper," said the magnate, blandly.

"Good-morning, Squire Jarvis," answered the superintendent.

"I would like to speak to you about a certain matter."

"Well, Squire Jarvis, in what way can I be of service to you?" asked the superintendent, wheeling about in his chair.

"Ahem! I'm sorry that I have to make a serious complaint against one of your employees," began the nabob somewhat brusquely.

"Indeed! I regret to hear that such is the reason of your visit. Who is the person to whom you refer, and what is the nature of the offense?"

"I will explain, sir. My son Lewis happened to be in this neighborhood last evening at half-past five, which is the hour the mill shuts down for the day, I believe."

The superintendent nodded.

"He stopped to speak to one of the girls—her name is Fairweather. I believe—when a boy by the name of Somers, employed in the engine-room, came up, and laying one of his greasy hands on my son's clean clothes, broke up the interview by saying it was time for the girl to go home. Lewis very properly resented this unwarranted interference; whereupon the Somers boy insulted him in a gross manner."

"I am sorry to hear you bring such a charge against young Somers, Squire Jarvis. Are you sure there isn't some mistake? Will Somers is the brightest boy in this establishment, and is noted for his gentlemanly conduct."

"No mistake whatever," answered the squire, positively. "My son stated the case very fairly to me. I judged from his manner that he rather underestimated the gravity of the offense, being unwilling, no doubt, to have his aggressor too severely punished, which is to his credit. As a large stockholder in this company, I wish you to understand that I cannot permit my son to be insulted by one of the employees. I therefore request that you will immediately discharge this Somers boy."

"I will take the matter under consideration, Squire Jarvis," politely responded the superintendent. "The charge will be investigated. It is only fair that young Somers be given a hearing in his own defense. I will also hear what Miss Fairweather has to say about it. Tell your son to call here at two o'clock this afternoon and I will listen to his side of the question. If I find that Will Somers has not treated your son fairly I will see that he is disciplined."

"I should think, Mr. Harper, that my statement of the case ought to be sufficient," said the nabob, pompously. "My



son would not lie to me. He has too much respect for himself and the position he occupies in society to make a charge not founded on fact. I may say this is not the first time this Somers boy has failed in according my son the respect to which he is entitled."

"It is a rule of mine never to proceed against any employee without having thoroughly sifted the evidence in the case. As a lawyer you understand that every one, no matter how humble his or her position, is entitled to an equal show of justice."

"Very well," responded the nabob, stiffly. "I shall expect that you will look into this thing at once. As soon as the Somers boy's offense has been shown to your satisfaction I look to you to discharge him immediately."

Superintendent Harper made no reply to this, and the squire, taking his silence in an affirmative sense, rose from the chair, bowed coldly and left the office.

"This isn't at all like Will Somers," muttered Mr. Harper, after he had sent to the engine-room for the boy. "Young Jarvis has evidently exaggerated the affair to suit his own views."

Will presently reported at the superintendent's office, clad in his overalls and jumper, and his bright, manly, young face favorably impressed the official whose duty it was to pass on the merits of the alleged difficulty.

"You wished to see me, Mr. Harper?" asked the lad, modestly.

"Yes, Will. I regret to say a charge has been made against you by Squire Jarvis. He has just left."

"I expected it," replied the boy, cheerfully. "Lewis Jarvis and I had a run-in last night about closing time, and he threatened to tell his father and have me discharged."

The superintendent smiled good-naturedly.

"I will hear what you have to say about it," he said, kindly.

Will at once rehearsed the cause of the trouble, and referred to Jessie Fairweather for corroboration of his story.

Mr. Harper nodded, as if he put a good deal of faith in the boy's statement.

"I will send for the lady in the case," he said, genially. "You may return to the engine-room. Rest assured you will be treated with perfect fairness."

Jessie Fairweather was called down from the operating room, and she backed Will's story with an earnestness that called up a smile to the superintendent's face.

"I see you have a friendly feeling for Will Somers," he said.

"I have," she replied, without any embarrassment. "He has been very kind to mother and myself, and I'm sure I like him very much."

"That is all, Miss Fairweather."

"You don't think he will be discharged for taking my part, do you, sir?" she asked, anxiously.

"I don't think you need worry about that," he replied, with a quizzical smile.

"Thank you."

Much against his will, Lewis Jarvis called on the superintendent that afternoon and gave his version of the difficulty.

His statement showed so much personal rancor against Will that the brief cross-examination to which he was subjected convinced Mr. Harper that there was no ground on which to proceed against Will in the matter, and accordingly he dismissed the charge, writing a note to Squire Jarvis to that effect.

Lewis was very much dissatisfied with the outcome of the affair.

Having failed to get square with Will Somers, he now transferred a portion of his enmity to Jessie Fairweather.

"She's a stuck-up thing for a poor mill hand," he said to himself with an air of disgust, as he was retiring for the night. "I'd like to take her down a peg or two. I believe she's stuck on that mechanic, and he acts as if he was gone on her. If I could only manage to get her fired from the factory 'twould make them both feel sore, and so I could kill two birds with one stone. I know what I'll do. Tessie Rickson is jealous of her. She likes Somers herself. Perhaps I can put something into Tessie's head that'll give her a chance to get that Fairweather girl into trouble. She'll grab at such a scheme in a minute. If it works, it'll be all right; if it doesn't, and Tessie gets into trouble over it, why, that'll be her lookout. In any case I don't risk anything. I'll see her to-morrow. It'll be a cold day when things don't come my way."

With which charitable reflection he hopped into bed and was soon asleep.

## CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH LEWIS JARVIS INTERVIEWS TESSIE RICKSON, AND AFTERWARDS HEARS SOMETHING THAT GIVES HIM GREAT SATISFACTION.

The factory hands had an hour for lunch, and most of the girls went home for the midday meal.

Tessie Rickson was one of these, and Lewis Jarvis, in accordance with his amiable intentions toward Jessie Fairweather, took care to meet her as if by accident on the way to her father's cottage.

Miss Rickson was a tall, somewhat angular young person, with red hair, which, however, she referred to as auburn, a freckled face, a vinegary-looking mouth and a turned-up nose.

While she wasn't prepared to admit even to herself what other people could see with half an eye—that she was decidedly plain, so far as looks were concerned—she was jealous of every girl who received more attention from the boys than herself.

She was particularly down on Jessie Fairweather because everybody said Jessie was the prettiest girl in Northport, and chiefly because she (Tessie) was somewhat sweet on Will Somers, and all the other girls said Jessie was Will's sweetheart.

Had she been mentally capable of originating any plan to get square with the captain's daughter she would have put it into practice long ago.

Fortunately, her powers in that direction were rather limited.

But she was mean and reckless enough to put into execution any scheme that might be suggested to her that had for its object the humiliation of Jessie Fairweather.

Consequently, as Lewis Jarvis had surmised, she was an easy tool for him to use.

"Good-afternoon, Tessie," said Lewis, taking off his hat to her.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Jarvis," she replied, pleased to be addressed by the nabob's son.

"I s'pose you don't object to my company for a little way, do you?" he said, with a smirk, intended to be fetching.

"Not at all; on the contrary, I shall consider it an honor," she answered, hoping some of her girl friends would see her walking with the magnate's son, and that the sight would make them turn green with jealousy.

"It's too bad that such a pretty girl as you should have to work on such a pleasant day," proceeded the astute Master Jarvis, with a polite grin.

"Isn't it?" cried Tessie, in a discontented tone. "However, I don't expect to work always, Mr. Jarvis."

"Sure you won't. Some rich young fellow, like myself, for instance, will come along and snap you up when you aren't thinking."

"I'm afraid the other girls would all be jealous of me, then," said Tessie, delighted at the suggestion, which had not occurred to her before.

"I guess they would, especially Jessie Fairweather. I hear she doesn't like you for a cent," said Lewis, artfully, "and doesn't care who knows it."

"I hate her!" snapped Miss Rickson, vindictively.

"She isn't so much, though she seems to think half the boys are crazy over her," continued the boy. "Do you think she's so pretty?"

"No, I don't; do you?" asked Tessie, with compressed lips.

"Not by a jugful. I like the color of your hair much better than hers."

"Do you really? You are making fun of me, ain't you?" she asked, doubtfully.

"I'm not. Her hair is nice enough in its way, but yours is the most fashionable shade. I heard my mother say so."

A whopper or two by the boy did not worry his conscience a great deal when they assisted him in the attainment of some object he had in view.

Miss Rickson was very pleased to hear that Mrs. Jarvis, the leader of Northport society, had actually noticed and favorably commented on her hair.

She would take care that all the girls she knew should hear about it.

"If I were you I wouldn't stand for Jessie Fairweather going about and telling the other girls that you had carrotty hair and—"



"Did she say that?" almost gasped Tessie, with flashing eyes.

"Not only carrot hair," added Lewis, smothering a grin with his hand, "but freckles as large as warts——"

"The idea!" screamed Miss Rickson, now as mad as a hornet. "The mean, artful creature!"

"That isn't all," went on Lewis, in his soft way. "I suppose you wouldn't believe she said your mouth was big enough to eat snowballs?"

"I'll get square with her for that," snapped the thoroughly enraged girl, clenching her coarse, brown hands.

"That's right. I wouldn't let any one crow over or make fun of me," said Lewis, egging the poor, deluded girl on. "I heard she was making fun of you before Will Somers the other night. Said you were only a bundle of bones—she was afraid to touch you for fear you'd rattle, and somebody might think one of the machines was out of order."

"Oh, I'll fix her, the flaxen-haired thing!" exclaimed Tessie, furiously.

"Look here," said Lewis, tapping her on the shoulder, "do you know what a girl once did to another girl who talked about her in that way?"

"No, I don't; what did she do?" asked Miss Rickson, with some interest.

"She got her fired from the shop where they both worked."

"Served her right. I'd give a good deal to get that washed-out blonde discharged from our place."

"This girl managed, somehow or other, to have a purse that did not belong to her found in one of the other girl's pockets. She was accused of theft, and as she couldn't prove she didn't take it, she was thrown out by the boss. It ought to be easy to work a thing like that. Now, mind, I don't tell you to do it—you've got too kind a heart to do anything like that, I know."

"Oh, yes," gritted the furious maiden, grasping at the idea like a drowning man at a straw. "I'm too kind-hearted. I wouldn't think of doing such a thing. But how do you know this pasty-faced Miss Fairweather would not steal the purse if she got the chance?"

"That's a fact," admitted Lewis, humoring her.

"And if 'twas found on her 'twould show she was really a thief, wouldn't it?"

"Sure it would," snickered Lewis, now feeling sure of the girl.

"I shouldn't be surprised if something like that actually did happen. We girls are very careless with our purses. If I should miss mine I'll know whom to accuse."

By that time they had reached the gate of the poor-looking Rickson cottage, and Lewis was on the point of bidding the girl good-by, when Jock Rickson, her father, appeared at the door, and asked him if he would not walk in, as he wanted to see him about a matter of importance.

Young Jarvis was not anxious for an interview with Tessie's father, but as he saw no way out of it, he followed the girl into the house.

While she repaired to the dining-room to get her dinner, the old man led Lewis into the darkened sitting-room, and asked him to sit down near his old mahogany escritoire.

Job Rickson looked older than he really was.

He was thin and spare like his daughter, with closely cropped carrot hair and freckled features.

He was mean and miserly by disposition, and though he had a fat account in the town savings bank, he always declared he was not worth a cent.

He kept his house and property in poor shape so as to hoodwink the assessor, but after all he deceived nobody so much as himself.

He often loaned money to his neighbors, on the best of security, of course.

While the State law prevented him from exacting usurious interest, he had ways and means of getting around the law that were unique.

"Do you think your father would be willing to collect a note for me?" began Mr. Rickson.

"Sure! Why not? That's part of his business, isn't it?" said Lewis in some surprise.

"I thought I'd ask you, because this here note's been runnin' a long time, and I hain't made no great attempt to collect it, 'cause the party hain't any too well fixed, you see, and it kind of goes ag'in' my grain to push poor people to the wall."

"The note isn't outlawed, is it?" asked Master Jarvis, suspiciously.

"No; not for four months yet."

"It's good, then. How much is it for?"

"Three hundred dollars. I really can't afford to lose so much money."

"Who is it against?"

"It is signed by Nat Somers. He's dead, you know; but I reckon his widder is responsible for it."

"Who did you say?" said Lewis, in some excitement. "Nat Somers, Will Somers' father?"

"You've got it jest right, young man," replied Mr. Rickson, nodding his head.

"You give me that note, Mr. Rickson," cried Lewis, jumping to his feet, "and my father'll collect it for you all right."

The old man promptly produced the note in question, and after the boy had looked it over to see that it was all right he started for his father's office.

"By the great hornspoon!" he ejaculated. "This is luck. I don't believe Mrs. Somers will be able to pay it. This is where I have got the squeeze on that low-down mechanic, Will Somers. You'll put your greasy paws on me, will you? Oh, father and I won't do a thing to you this time, you pauper! I've got you where I want you now, and I'll make you eat humble pie, all right."

With this plous feeling in his mind he hurried along the street.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GAME OF CHANCE.

As the Fairweather and Somers homesteads, of some five acres each, adjoined one another on the suburbs of Northport, it was quite the usual thing of late for Will and Jessie to go home together after their day's work.

At closing time on the day that Master Jarvis had his interview with Tessie Rickson, Jessie found Will waiting for her at the gate.

"I'm on time to-night, all right," he said in a tone of satisfaction, as he bowed politely to several of the other girls passing out at the moment. "Are you glad?"

"I am afraid it will make you dreadfully conceited if I admit I am," said Jessie, with a tantalizing little laugh. "You boys do think such an awful lot of yourselves."

"Come, now, Jessie, you're too hard on us," remonstrated Will with a grin, as they started off together.

"Am I? Really. Why, I never look at Lewis Jarvis but I almost fancy the world isn't quite large enough to hold him comfortably," laughed the girl.

"Lewis Jarvis is in a class all by himself, so far as this town is concerned. I shouldn't feel at all flattered if you compared me with him."

"I certainly wouldn't think of doing such a thing. He isn't a real boy. And just think, he calls himself a gentleman, because he doesn't have to work and because his father is looked upon as one of the biggest men in town. A gentleman wouldn't act the way he did the night before last," said Jessie, scornfully.

"I should say not," answered Will, emphatically. "He didn't lose any time trying to get me bounced because I interfered in your behalf. But his pull didn't seem to work. He's mean enough to do most anything. Of course, he's got it in for me now, but I ain't afraid of anything he can do. There isn't anything against me at the mill, and I don't propose there shall be, as I make it a point to attend strictly to my business during working hours."

"Mother says you're bound to become a successful man if you live," said the girl, with a look of admiration at her escort.

"That's what I'm aiming for," replied the boy, with modest confidence.

"You intend to become an engineer, I suppose?"

"Certainly; but I don't mean to stop at that. One of these days I hope to own at least a part of a mill myself, and a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the engine-room ought to be of great value to the proprietor himself."

"You are aiming high, Will," said Jessie, with a smile.

"I think every young fellow ought to aim high in this world if he ever expects to land in a good place where he can make money."

"That's something many boys, Lewis Jarvis, for instance, don't feel called upon to worry about. The money is already provided for them in advance."

"All the same, I wouldn't change places with Lewis Jarvis. Money isn't everything, not by a long shot. It sometimes has wings and disappears all of a sudden. If he puts all his reliance in his father's wealth, and it should happen to get



away from him one of these days after he has grown up, where will he be at?"

"I'm not good at guessing conundrums, Will," laughed the girl. "And that reminds me of a conundrum with which you are connected, and which I've been trying hard to solve ever since last winter."

"What's that, Jessie?" asked the boy, curiously.

"The girls all call it Will Somers' Folly whenever they speak about it."

"Oh, I know what you refer to now," grinned the boy, "and perhaps they may be right, though until the fact is proved I must beg to differ with them. I call it a game of chance—it's a toss-up whether I come out ahead or not; but I think the odds, if anything, should be in my favor, for I have worked the thing on a sort of scientific basis. While I feel confident I have gone the right way about it to reach results, it doesn't follow that I shall succeed. When dealing with such a treacherous proposition as the 'quaking bog,' as the people call it, or the ten-acre swamp-lot, as I call it, a fellow can't feel very sure where he's going to come out. Success means a good thing, Jessie; failure means—well, the loss of twenty-five dollars cash, and a great many hours of the hardest work I ever put in in my life. But, worst of all, it will mean the 'grand laugh' at my expense."

"Do let me into the secret, won't you?" said Jessie, persuasively. "For there is a secret, I know. You're too smart a boy to go into any scheme blindfolded. It isn't like you. It may be a game of chance, as you call it; but I'm certain there's some method in your madness."

"Well, Jessie, at least I had the advantage of one man's failure to give me a wrinkle before I went into the thing."

"It was such a total failure that I wonder you ever took up with it."

"That's what it was. When Mr. Rickson bought that swamp-lot at what he thought was a bargain, he was under the impression that all he had to do was to erect a strong dam across the outlet of the bog at the beginning of cold weather, and by confining the water which constantly soaked into the swamp from the springs and small streams from the ledgy hills above, overflow the lot. At first nobody, including myself, could understand what he was trying to get at."

"I remember," laughed Jessie; "but when the boom in ice began, and the papers were full of accounts of almost fabulous prices paid for 'ice privileges' which lay convenient for shipping, whether they were mill-ponds or fresh-water marshes, the object of Mr. Rickson's dam was apparent."

"Just so," agreed Will. "He intended to overflow the swamp and make a ten-acre pond. From the pond thus formed to the wharf below is about two hundred yards, and a descending grade all the way—so that by means of a cheap chute the ice, after having been marked out and cut into proper chunks, could be sent sliding down to the very verge of the wharf, there to be taken on board of vessels ready to receive it. It was a great scheme, wasn't it?"

"Yes; but, unfortunately for Mr. Rickson, it turned out a great failure."

"That's right. Still, how could he guess that the very effort he made to flood the surface of the lot would merely cause the swamp itself to rise until it was nearly level with the land around it."

"What made it act that way? One would naturally think that the incoming water, finding its escape cut off, would form a pond there."

"That's the way Mr. Rickson figured; but here's how he came to get left: The roots of the moss and matted grass of which the swamp was composed could find no holding ground in the soft black mud underneath, so that the inflowing water, finding itself deprived of its usual outlet by the dam, raised the whole mass with it. There was no lack of water, don't you see; but it was under the surface of the swamp, instead of overflowing it."

"What a shame!" giggled Jessie, as the ludicrous side of the affair came to her.

"Yes, it was tough on Mr. Rickson, who had expected to sell the ice privilege for several thousand dollars."

"I should think that ought to have been lesson enough for you," said Jessie, with an inquiring look.

"It was, only not in the sense you look at it. I admit I gave Mr. Rickson the laugh with the rest, and several times I visited the place to look at the 'sell.' It was on one of those occasions that an idea came to me. So I set my wits to work to put it into tangible shape. I studied the character of the swamp, and the result was satisfactory. Then

I sought means to carry out my plan. I found them at hand. All that remained was the manual labor, for which I could not afford to pay. So I tackled it myself when I could find the time, and you can gamble on it, Jessie, there wasn't an ounce of fun in it."

"I shouldn't think there was," admitted the girl, "judging from what you told me at the time; though you would not gratify my curiosity by telling me the reason for a proceeding which seemed so senseless to every one who heard about it."

"Well, I'm telling you now, but you must keep it quiet."

"I won't say a word, honor bright," protested Jessie.

"I bought the swamp-lot and the dam just as it stood from Mr. Rickson for twenty-five dollars. I agreed to remove a big heap of stones, as tall as a barn, from Farmer Botts' land hard by, on condition that he would let me have the use of his ox-team for that purpose."

"He must have thought you were crazy."

"Probably he did, but he wasn't fool enough to say so, as he had the soft end of the bargain. When the swamp-lot had frozen over so that it would bear the ox-team I began to use up all of my spare time of night hauling rocks from Boggs' field to the basin in which lay the swamp-lot, and I spread them in heaps over the surface of the ice. I'd hate to tell you how many tons I deposited there before the end of winter. I was mighty glad when I got away with the last load."

"I know all about that, Will Somers—everybody knows it. Lots of people have gone over there and looked at those piles of rocks and wondered what you were trying to get at, but they couldn't guess any more than I."

"As it wasn't any business of theirs, I didn't take the trouble to enlighten them. I haven't any use for butters-in, Jessie."

"Do you include me in that remark, Will? If you remember, I was just as curious as anybody else," said the girl, with a quizzical smile.

"Present company always accepted," said the boy, hastily, whereat she laughed gaily.

"Well," she said, "I'm waiting patiently for this explanation you promised to give me. I'm still as much in the dark as ever."

"After I had finished with the rocks I took down part of the dam and waited. When the ice began to melt with the coming of spring the stones gradually disappeared among the moss and grass. Then the swamp looked the same as it ever did. Since then I've simply been waiting."

"For what, pray?"

"For winter to set in again. This is October. In a week or so I'll repair the dam and let the water collect. I expect it will be on the surface, not under the swamp this time."

"Why should it be different with you than what it was with Mr. Rickson?"

"Because I trust that the rocks, which have gone down pretty evenly into the matted grass and moss, will anchor down the entire surface of the bog. Should this prove to be the case, the formation of a ten-acre pond will be a simple proposition."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jessie, a great light dawning upon her mind.

"If it does I shall have as pretty a pond as you ever saw in your life, and a field of clear ice worth at least \$3,000 or \$4,000."

"What a head you've got, Will Somers!" cried the girl, in admiration of his genius.

"If I fail my name will resemble the soil under the swamp."

"What is that?" asked Jessie in surprise.

"Mud!" ejaculated Will, tersely.

## CHAPTER V.

### IN WHICH SQUIRE JARVIS VISITS THE SOMERS HOME.

The quaint little Dutch timepiece which Captain Fairweather had brought from Holland some years before, and afterward presented to Nathaniel Somers, his neighbor, and which occupied a conspicuous position on the mantel of the sitting-room in the Somers home, had just struck the hour of eight, when a loud, authoritative knock came on the front door.

"I wonder who can that be?" said Mrs. Somers, looking up in mild wonder.

Will, who was poring over a new book on practical engineering which he had got from the town public library, jumped up and went to the door.

He was surprised, and perhaps not a little apprehensive,



to find that the visitor was none other than the pompous Squire Jarvis.

What could be the meaning of this great man's visit to their humble home?

"Is Mrs. Somers at home?" asked the lawyer, stiffly.

"Yes, sir," replied Will, respectfully. "Will you walk in?"

Squire Jarvis brushed past the boy with as little consideration as though he was a wooden image, and Mrs. Somers rose hastily from her chair as his portly form filled the door leading into the sitting-room.

"Squire Jarvis!" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, ma'am," answered the nabob, in a tone that seemed to indicate that he was conferring a distinguished honor on the cottage by his presence there.

"Take the rocking-chair," said the lady of the house, pointing to a substantial piece of furniture that was the pride of the house.

The squire bowed condescendingly, seated himself, and glanced curiously about the room.

Mrs. Somers reseated herself and waited for the great man to explain the nature of his unexpected call.

"Ahem, ma'am," began the squire, feeling that what he had to say was not likely to cause a pleasant impression, "I have called in reference to a little matter that has been placed in my hands."

Mrs. Somers bowed and waited for him to proceed.

At this moment Will re-entered the room, and took up a position in the background, curious to learn, as he half suspected, if he was the cause of the magnate's visit.

He was soon undeceived.

"I refer to a note of hand, signed by your late husband in favor of Job Rickson, for the sum of \$300. The note," continued the squire, fishing out his glasses and polishing them with a sort of professional movement upon the bridge of his aristocratic nose, and then taking out a bulky morocco pocket-book, from which he deliberately extracted the document in question, "is dated February 1, 189—, and expired one year from date, when it became due and payable, according to the terms therein expressed. It should have been presented for payment at that time. But your husband having died in the meanwhile, leaving you (ahem) in somewhat straightened circumstances, so far as ready money was concerned, Mr. Rickson refrained from calling immediately on you for the amount owing him, feeling sure you would recognize his claim as soon as you were in a position less financially embarrassing. While this was not business, it reflects a great credit on Mr. Rickson's goodness of heart—a fact, I regret to say, not generally appreciated by his acquaintances. In fact, he has delayed so long the presentation of this note that it is now within a few months of the time when, according to the laws of the State, it would have become outlawed, and consequently worthless. Fortunately, he called my attention to it, and I advised him to collect at once, and so he turned it over to me for that purpose. Therefore, I should be glad to learn what you are prepared to do about it."

Squire Jarvis having delivered himself of the foregoing in his most impressive manner, he removed his glasses from their perch and began to twirl them around his index finger while he regarded the little brown-haired widow with a judicial sort of look, possibly with the view of confusing and intimidating her.

Mrs. Somers had listened to him with the utmost amazement, but politely forbore interrupting him.

But when he had concluded she said, quietly:

"That note was taken up by my husband a few days before his death and paid."

"Paid, ma'am!" ejaculated the lawyer.

"Yes, sir; and Mr. Rickson gave my husband a receipt for the money."

"You certainly are laboring under a misapprehension of the facts. If your husband paid this note, it stands to reason it would not now be in the possession of Mr. Rickson. When a note is settled it is always delivered to the person who drew it, by whom it is, or should be, immediately destroyed."

"I think I can account for the fact that it happens to be in Mr. Rickson's possession," said Mrs. Somers, a slight note of scorn in her tone.

"I am ready to hear any explanation you have to make," said the lawyer, stiffly.

"That he presents it at this late day for repayment does not speak well for that goodness of heart you have just credited him with," said the little lady, coldly.

"Ma'am," interrupted Squire Jarvis, severely, "you must not attack the character of such an old and respected citizen as Mr. Rickson."

"I was about to explain to you why Mr. Somers did not get possession of that note at the time he paid the money. The note still had several months to run when he expressed his intention of taking it up. Mr. Rickson at first objected, but when my husband offered him the year's interest he accepted the money and gave a receipt for the same, saying he would give up the note in a few days, as soon as he got it from the bank, where he had deposited it for safe-keeping. My husband, probably feeling that he was protected by the receipt, did not hurry him. In fact, before he may have thought of the matter again, he met with the accident which resulted, unfortunately for himself and family, in his premature death."

Mrs. Somers paused and wiped away a tear.

"Your statement is certainly plausible," admitted Squire Jarvis, beginning to fear he had called on a fool's errand, after all, and that the unsavory reputation Mr. Rickson bore in town, with which the squire was familiar, was once more cropping up in evidence. "If you have Mr. Rickson's receipt for the three hundred dollars, of course I shall have nothing more to say. I am not responsible for any act of Mr. Rickson's, ma'am, being merely his agent in the matter. If it is not too much trouble, will you kindly produce the receipt, so that I may convince myself of its genuineness?"

"I am sorry to say that the receipt has been mislaid ever since my husband's death," replied Mrs. Somers, not without some apprehension as to what effect this honest admission would have on the lawyer.

"Mislaid, ma'am!" exclaimed the squire, raising his eyebrows in a way that might have implied that he thought such a statement rather thin.

"Yes, sir," replied the little widow, with a slight touch of indignation in her voice, for the squire's pantomime had not escaped her.

"Very singular," he remarked, tapping the note with his glasses. "Very singular, indeed."

"I hope you don't think I am not telling the truth?" with a quiet scorn that disturbed him.

"Not at all, not at all," he replied, hastily. "I never doubt a lady's word; but people are often mistaken, ma'am. You—"

"There is no mistake in this case, Squire Jarvis," said Mrs. Somers, firmly. "I regret to say I have not been able to find the receipt. As Mr. Rickson made no effort to recollect the note when it became due, nor at any time during the years that have since elapsed, I naturally presumed it was all right, and gave no further thought to the matter. I must say it is a singular thing for him to present it for payment now, within a few weeks of the time when, as you say, it would become outlawed. I will not express my opinion as to his motives, but will leave you to judge that yourself."

"Well, ma'am," said the wily lawyer, scratching the point of his nose with the rim of his glasses, "it is certainly unfortunate that you cannot produce the receipt. As the case stands, Mr. Rickson has the law on his side, and so, unless you can find the receipt, I am afraid you will have to pay the money over again."

"But, sir," cried the widow, aghast, "that would be most unjust."

"The law, ma'am, passes only upon facts; it has nothing whatever to do with sentiment. People should not be careless—therein lies the cause of much trouble in this world that we lawyers are often called upon to unravel, and not always with success. If your husband had insisted upon the immediate return of the note, which was well within his rights, or you had not lost the receipt, which would to all intents and purposes answer the same end, you would not now be in this trouble."

"I consider it an outrage that Mr. Rickson should make this demand when he well knows that he was paid once," cried Mrs. Somers, in great indignation.

"With that I have nothing whatever to do, ma'am," said the nabob, rising and taking his hat. "I am simply acting on the instructions of my client, with the evidence he has produced, and which you seem unable to gainsay. I will give you a week to consider what you will do, at the end of which time I shall expect you to call or send to my office and advise me of your determination."

"But I cannot agree to pay that note over again," she said, almost tearfully.

"In that case the law will have to take its course."

"Do you mean to say, sir, that the law will rob my mother of another three hundred dollars?" demanded Will, facing the magnate of Northport.



Squire Jarvis glared at the boy as though astonished at the lad's audacity in addressing him so boldly.

"I mean to say, young man, that your mother will have to go to court and show cause why judgment on this note, together with interest to date, shall not be rendered in favor of Mr. Rickson. If she loses, which she is bound to do unless she produces the alleged receipt, she will also have to pay the costs of the action, which will raise the total amount to something over four hundred and fifty dollars."

"And if we refuse to pay that?" said the boy, with flashing eyes.

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"This property, which is in your mother's name, will be sold to satisfy the judgment, and the expenses of the sale, with the sheriff's fees, will also be added to the sum I have mentioned. You will find it a costly matter to fight against the law. I advise you not to try it."

Thus speaking, Squire Jarvis walked majestically toward the front door, and Will, oppressed by a sense of utter helplessness to resist the swindle about to be perpetrated on his mother, followed and let him out.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE STRANGE VISITOR TO THE TOOL-HOUSE.

"What shall we do, my son?" asked Mrs. Somers in a troubled voice when Will returned to the sitting-room.

"I don't know, mother. I suppose you will have to consult a lawyer. I never believed Mr. Rickson to be such a contemptible swindler," he added, bitterly.

"He is certainly trying to do us a grievous wrong," said his mother, sadly.

"Mother, why did father borrow three hundred dollars from Mr. Rickson?"

"Because he wished to secure a strip of ground belonging to the Peasley estate, which lay between the end of our property and the river. He had long tried to get possession of it, for, small as it was, he knew that it would more than double the value of our own land, by giving it a water frontage. Until old Mr. Peasley died the strip of ground was not for sale. The chance to purchase it was suddenly offered to your father, and rather than lose the opportunity, which might not have occurred again, he decided to raise the amount on his note. A contract, which he completed just before he was struck down, enabled him to return the money to Mr. Rickson before the note matured. Your father was not a suspicious man. He credited others with the same honesty he himself possessed. That's why he did not insist on Mr. Rickson giving up that note immediately. Had he lived, of course things would have been different. Mr. Rickson never would have dared—"

"I should say not," said Will, indignantly. "He thinks that because he has a woman to deal with he can take undue advantage of the situation. You have no idea where that receipt went to, then, mother?"

"Unfortunately, I have not."

"You must make a thorough search of the house at once, and I will get Jessie to help you."

"I will do so, of course. It would be a great misfortune if this property was taken from us to satisfy such an unjust claim."

"Don't worry, mother. It shall not be taken from you."

"You speak hopefully, my son; but I fear we are in a sad predicament."

"There, mother, we'll let the thing drop for to-night. You look for the paper to-morrow. If it hasn't turned up by the time I come home after work I'll step over to the Fairweathers and ask Jessie to lend you a hand."

At this point the Dutch clock struck ten, and presently mother and son retired for the night.

The window of Will's room overlooked the river, on whose surface the old October moon shone with a chilly glitter.

As Will stood a moment gazing out upon the landscape he saw what he thought to be a small boat, with a single occupant, moving cautiously up the river.

"Gee!" he said. "Rather a cold night to be on the water. I wonder who it is?"

The boat approached the Somers landing place, the occupant fastened a line to one of the spile-heads and jumped ashore.

Then he began to slouch along beside the fence that divided the Somers property from that of the Fairweathers.

"Who the dickens is he, and what is he up to?" Will asked himself as the figure cautiously drew near to the house.

"I don't like his looks for a cent," commented the boy, as

the intruder paused close to a tall oak tree and a ray of moonlight shone on his face which, though young, looked, even at that distance, hard and uninviting.

The intruder took out a small black pipe, which he deliberately filled with tobacco from a pouch, and then glided behind the tree and sat on the ground, for the glare of a lighted match showed his position.

For fifteen minutes thereafter all that betrayed his presence was the occasional whiff of whitish smoke that floated about the oak as the fellow puffed at his pipe.

Will, now decidedly interested in the stranger's movements, felt no desire to go to bed.

"I'd give something to know what he means by sitting out there under our oak tree on a cold night like this. He doesn't appear to be any too warmly dressed, either. Something evidently is in the wind. Does he propose to try and break into our house, or into the Fairweather's, a little later on? I fancy he'll get an unexpected and warm reception if he tries it."

At this stage of his reflections the intruder suddenly reappeared around the tree and began a critical survey of the Somers premises.

Then he deliberately walked over to a small tool-house, stocked with implements formerly used by Mr. Somers when he was alive, and which since his death had not been touched. He tried the door.

It was found to be locked, of course.

After considering a moment the fellow hauled a tall chopping block up against the side of the shed, mounted it, and pushed in the only window the building had.

Then he climbed into the opening and disappeared inside.

"I guess it's time for me to interfere," said Will resolutely. "I don't believe he's gone in there to sleep, and I'm not going to have any of my father's things stolen if I can help it."

So, taking his shoes in his hands so as not to awaken his mother, he crept down to the kitchen, which overlooked the tool-house.

"I'll wait here and see what transpires," said the boy, putting on his shoes, so as to be in readiness to pop out suddenly into the yard.

Will waited a good quarter of an hour before there were any further developments.

Then the visitor's head reappeared at the window, and with remarkable agility he swung himself through the opening and dropped to the ground.

Will saw the handles of several short tools protruding from his side pockets.

"That settles it. I've got to stop him. Now, how in the name of wonder did he know that was a tool-house? One would think he was familiar with our place, yet so far as I can judge, he seems to be a perfect stranger in this locality."

As the stranger started off for the open gate Will softly opened the kitchen door and attempted to cut him off from the street.

His sudden appearance on the scene startled the intruder for a moment, and he stood stock still.

Each had a plain view of the other in the moonlight.

"Will Somers!" ejaculated the young fellow, beginning to back away.

His voice had such a familiar ring that the boy stopped and regarded him keenly.

The closer view and the bright moonshine did the rest.

"Ed Rickson!" Will exclaimed in astonishment. "You back?"

"Well, what of it?" replied the fellow with a snarl. "Ain't this where I live when I'm at home?"

"What were you doing in our tool-house just now?" demanded the boy, aggressively. "I didn't think you were a thief, Ed Rickson. Your father wouldn't like to know what you've been up to."

"My father!"

He had reached the fence by this time and laid one hand on it.

The two words were uttered with a sneering intonation not pleasant to hear.

"Yes, your father," repeated Will, greatly surprised at young Rickson's manner.

"Good-night!" and with a mocking laugh Ed Rickson vaulted the paling and darted off down the deserted street at a high rate of speed.

It was useless for Will to think of following him; indeed, since he had recognized Ed Rickson he had no great desire to do so.

After watching his dwindling figure disappear in the gloom,



Will went back to the tool-house, mounted the block, struck a match, and looked inside.

He saw that the lid of one of the chests had been forced open.

"I'll investigate closer in the morning and see what you've taken, Ed Rickson," he said, as he closed the window and removed the chopping block.

## CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH TESSIE RICKSON SPRINGS A TRAP ON JESSIE FAIRWEATHER, AND HOW IT WORKED.

The operating room of the Northport cotton mills was in full swing.

At least a hundred busy girls were employed in that room, and the majority of them had their eyes cocked up at the big clock which hung within sight of all, for the long hand pointed to a minute to twelve.

Way down in the engine-room, at the corner of the big yard, Will Somers was also watching a smaller timepiece, while one of his hands was raised, his fingers gripping the cord that would in another moment send forth the welcome blast releasing every one of the mill's employees from work for one hour.

At that interesting moment Tessie Rickson, who had been to the dressing-room, rushed up to one of the forewomen in a state of great excitement.

"Oh, Miss McBoyle, somebody has taken my pocketbook!" she said, hysterically.

"What's that?" asked the forewoman, sharply.

She was a stout, red-faced woman, whom none of the girls liked, because she was such a crank.

Jessie Fairweather, in particular, was a target for Miss McBoyle's ill temper, because she took very little notice of the woman's outbursts, and also because she was so pretty and such a general favorite.

"Somebody has taken my pocketbook," repeated Tessie, in a voice sufficiently loud to attract attention.

"Nonsense!" snapped Miss McBoyle.

"It's really so!" persisted the red-haired girl, with a great show of earnestness.

"You mislaid it somewhere."

"No, I didn't, Miss McBoyle; I know I left it in the pocket of my jacket in the dressing-room."

"Well, what do you expect me to do about it?" grunted the forewoman.

"I wish you'd come in and help me find it."

"The idea! Don't you think I've something else to do, Miss Rickson?"

"Oh, dear! I don't know what I shall do!" piped Tessie, tearfully.

At that moment off went the whistle, and the girls throughout the room began to flock at once toward the dressing-rooms.

"Well, come along," said Miss McBoyle rather ungraciously.

"Somebody must have taken it out of my pocket," insinuated Tessie.

"I don't believe it," replied the forewoman.

"Well, I wouldn't trust that Fairweather girl, as she is such a favorite," said Tessie, vindictively.

"What makes you think she might do such a thing?"

"Oh, I've my reasons," said Miss Rickson, tossing her head disdainfully.

"Well, I must say I don't fancy her myself," sniffed the forewoman.

Tessie knew that, and began to throw out insinuations against the fair Jessie.

"I'd search her dress if I was you," said Miss Rickson, eagerly.

For reasons of her own, the forewoman was ready to adopt this unfair plan, for she was only too eager to humiliate the belle of the factory.

So she snatched down the girl's walking dress from the hook just as its owner entered the room with a bevy of her friends.

"Why, Miss McBoyle, that's my dress," protested Jessie, as the woman thrust her coarse red hand into the pocket of the dress, much to Tessie's delight.

"I believe it is," snapped the forewoman as she brought a small pocketbook to the light.

"There! I told you she took it!" screamed Tessie. "That's my pocketbook."

"What have you got to say to this, Miss Fairweather?" asked Miss McBoyle, with a triumphant ring to her voice.

"Are you in the habit of taking things that don't belong to you?"

"I don't understand, Miss McBoyle," replied Jessie with dignity.

"Indeed! Perhaps you can explain how Miss Rickson's pocketbook happened to be in the pocket of your dress?"

The other girls crowding around stared in astonishment. "I haven't the slightest idea how such a thing occurred, unless Miss Rickson put it there herself by mistake."

"The idea!" sniffed Tessie, with a scornful glance at her intended victim.

"She accuses you of stealing it from her," said the forewoman, severely.

"Accuses me—of—stealing her pocketbook!" gasped Jessie, flushing with mortification at such a charge.

"Yes, miss. And as the article has been found in your possession I shall have to inform the superintendent," said Miss McBoyle in a tone of satisfaction. "I had no idea we had a thief in the mill."

"Miss McBoyle, how dare you insinuate such a thing!" cried Jessie, tears of indignation coming into her pretty eyes.

"It's a shame!" chorused the other girls. "Jessie wouldn't do such a thing."

"You're mad because you've been caught in the act," sneered the forewoman. "I always thought you were a sly thing, with your innocent airs and prudish ways. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Girls, do you believe me capable of such a thing?" cried Jessie, appealing with burning cheeks and flashing eyes to her working mates.

"No!" they shouted with one accord.

"How can you accuse Jessie of taking your property, Tessie Rickson?" cried one spirited girl, putting her arm around Jessie Fairweather.

"Well, it was found on her, all right," said Tessie, spitefully.

"I believe you put it there yourself, just to get her into trouble," cried another girl, coming to Jessie's aid.

"The idea!" retorted Tessie, angrily. "You can believe what you like, Clara Parks, but I've my own opinion. It isn't the first thing I've missed. Some people put on a lot of airs, when they ain't no better than—"

"Than what, Tessie Rickson?" said Jessie, walking up to her accuser and looking her squarely in the eye.

"You needn't try to intimidate me, Miss Makebelieve," replied Tessie, scornfully. "You may softsolder the rest of the girls, but you can't draw the wool over my eyes. You are a deceitful thing! I know you talk about me behind my back. Say I have carrot hair, that my mouth is large enough to swallow snowballs, and I'm all bones. I hate you—there!"

And Miss Rickson, with tears of rage in her green eyes, marched out of the room, leaving Jessie almost paralyzed with pained astonishment.

Miss McBoyle had in the meanwhile gone down to the superintendent's office to register the charge of attempted theft against Miss Fairweather.

"What must you girls think of me?" exclaimed Jessie, breaking down at last under the strain of the terrible position in which she was placed.

"I know what I think!" cried one of her devoted adherents. "You're the best and sweetest girl I ever knew," and the speaker kissed Jessie tenderly.

"It's a shame!" said Miss Parks, indignantly.

"It's more than that," cried a little brunette, "it's an outrage. I move we have nothing more to do with Tessie Rickson."

"I say so, too!" cried another girl.

"And I!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

The whole bunch agreed.

"We'll fix her, the hateful thing!" cried Miss Parks. "It's a put-up job of her own. As for Miss Vinegary McBoyle, she only wanted an excuse to jump on Jessie. She is forever picking at her, anyway. Now don't cry, dear. We're all your friends, and we're just going to stand by you right up to the handle, as my brother calls it, aren't we, girls?"

"Yes," in chorus.

"You're very kind, all of you!" sobbed Jessie. "But you don't know how mortified I feel at being called a thief. Just as if I could take the value of a pin from any one. Oh, dear, it's terrible!"

"If I was you I would go right straight to the superintendent and demand justice," cried Miss Parks.



"And we'll all go with you!" exclaimed the rest.

And the result of it was that Jessie did march straight down to the superintendent's office and stated the case.

Mr. Harper smiled good-naturedly.

"Miss McBoyle made a sort of charge against you, Miss Fairweather, but I laughed her down. Why, bless you, young lady, I'd as soon think one of my own daughters guilty of such a thing as you. There! Don't cry, please. I take no stock in it at all. It is simply ridiculous. Go home, all of you, to your dinners, and I'll allow you half an hour extra to-day, under the circumstances, as you've lost that much time over this silly affair."

And Miss Rickson, when she returned to work that afternoon, found, to her great disgust and mortification, that not a girl in the room would notice her.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FOR THE SAKE OF HER ENEMY.

A great deal of sympathy was expressed by the girls of the Northport cotton mills for Jessie Fairweather that afternoon, while at the same time, if Miss McBoyle and Tessie Rickson could have heard all the remarks passed upon their conduct over the pocketbook affair, they would not have been a bit pleased.

"Now, what do you think of that?" cried Will Somers, after one of the "kids" of the establishment had told him all about the dressing-room trouble.

This remark was made to Mr. Davis, the engineer, who, pipe in mouth, had been quietly listening to the story.

"A jealous girl is capable of doing a great deal of mischief," said the engineer, sagely.

"Well, I should say so. But only a very spiteful, reckless girl would put up such a mean job as that," said Will, angrily.

Mr. Davis nodded.

"Of course there isn't any doubt but she was at the bottom of the scheme," went on Will, "though the fact hasn't actually been shown. But from the way Billy says the girls are handing it out to Miss Rickson this afternoon it's evident that they all believe she's guilty of the plot. And wouldn't you think that a woman like Miss McBoyle would easily have seen through such a thin device?"

"This latest contrivance of yours which I attached to the boiler yesterday afternoon seems to be working all right," said Mr. Davis.

"Is that a fact, sir?" answered Will, with sparkling eyes.

The engineer nodded.

"You've got some good ideas in that brain of yours, young man," continued Mr. Davis, approvingly. "I'm satisfied you could pass examination for a stationary engineer's license."

"Thank you for your good opinion, Mr. Davis. I am sure I owe a large part of my proficiency to your instruction and encouragement," replied Will, gratefully.

"That may be," admitted the engineer; "but if it was not in you my endeavors would have been wasted. There is a heap of satisfaction in helping a young fellow along when you see he's trying his best to take advantage of his opportunities. All boys are not as clever as you are. Too many of them are ambitious to do great things for which they have no ability, but are not inclined to do little things for which they alone are capable. Now, for instance—"

That, however, was as far as the engineer got on this occasion, for at that instant there came to their ears a shrill scream from the direction of the factory building.

"Something's wrong!" exclaimed Will, springing to the open doorway.

The third-story windows of the operating-room were filled with screaming girls, above whose heads a thin film of smoke was sifting out on the afternoon air.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" wailed the girls from point to point.

"Great Scott!" shouted Will back to the engineer as he dashed out of the doorway. "I believe the factory is on fire!"

All the men employees working about the yard started for the imperilled building, into the main entrance of which Superintendent Harper, hatless and excited, had just disappeared.

Two or three girls came bursting out from the employees' entrance, falling faint upon one another in a heap, and were speedily dragged up and carried several yards away by some of the men.

Then a crowd of workers from the ground and second floors came rushing out.

On the far side of the factory, that which overlooked the

street, Will saw a huge volume of dark smoke, mingled with spurts of flame, rising above the level of the roof.

"The place is on fire, sure enough!" he cried as he hurried forward. "But why in creation don't the girls chase themselves down the main stairway?"

The reason for this was apparent when the boy entered the building and had mounted to the second floor.

The stairs leading to the small corridor on the next floor, and which communicated with the main fire-escape on the front of the building, was a mass of flames.

The upper passage was choked by a dense smoke, that blocked any attempt to reach the fire-escape in question.

All retreat from the operating-room by the main avenues of escape was cut off.

"Great Caesar!" exclaimed Will, aghast at the peril which menaced the employees on the upper floor. "The girls will have to hustle down the emergency iron stairways at the ends of the building."

"Where's the hose?" hoarsely shouted Mr. Harper at the foot of the burning stairs.

"We're bringing one up, sir!" replied a burly yardman from below, who, with the help of a companion, was dragging a length of fire hose which had just been attached to the hydrant outside the back door.

Will saw he could be of no use where he was, and anxious for the safety of the girls, and that of Jessie Fairweather in particular, he ran back to the yard in time to see a long ladder planted against the wall of the factory, beneath one of the windows that was crowded with screaming girls.

The men were shouting to the girls to go to the ends of the building and come down by the iron stairs, but so rattled were the poor things that only a few were seen to take advantage of these exits.

"Let me go up the ladder!" and Will started at once to ascend, with a view of calming the panic that was raging on the top floor.

The ladder was too short to reach the level of the window, but by carefully balancing himself on the topmost rung Will grasped the window-sill and scrambled into the long operating-room, forcing back a dozen girls who blocked the way.

"Why don't you go to the end of the room?" cried the boy to the terrified young women. "You can all get down by the iron stairways if you only go about it right."

Will began forcing the groups of employees toward the other end of the building, never for a moment ceasing to shout to them how they could get out, until at last he got the tide set in both directions; and the girls then began to stream down the iron stairways, encouraged by workmen on the several landings and on the ground below.

By this time a stream of water was turned on the fire, but the blaze had got too much headway to be subdued by one line of hose.

However, help was coming from the outside.

The town fire department, three engine companies, were now rushing to the scene as fast as the horses could bring them.

Will, working like a beaver for the safety of the girls, had not recognized Jessie among the crowd, which had by this time thinned down to a dozen or two, waiting their chance in fear and trembling to get onto the iron stairs.

"She must have got out all right," he thought, thankfully, as he saw the last of the girls passing through the end windows of the smoky room. "Gee! It's getting pretty hot up here now, all right. The fire has got hold of the dressing-room, I see. The girls will lose all their clothes; but better that than their lives. Time for me to go, I guess."

At this moment one of the sides of the partition separating the operating-room from the corridor fell in with a crash, and Will had a clear view of the blazing stairway beyond.

As he started for one of the iron stairways himself, tears in his eyes from the effects of the smoke, and his throat parched and smarting from the same cause, he suddenly stopped short within a few yards of the blazing dressing-room.

The hurried glance he had cast in that direction showed him a human hand and part of an arm thrust through the half open doorway.

"Great heavens!" he cried. "Some poor girl has fainted in there. I must save her at any cost!"

Dropping on his knees to escape the stifling air as much as possible, he crawled rapidly over to the door of the dressing-room.

Pushing the door wide open, he saw in the red glare of the blaze that now had full possession of the room two insensible girls, one of whom, who seemed to have been in the



act of dragging her companion away from peril when she herself had been overcome, he recognized, with a thrill of horrified surprise, as Jessie Fairweather.

The other was Jessie's bitter enemy, Tessie Rickson.

Will took in the situation at a glance.

"You're a noble girl, Jessie," he murmured, as he seized hold of her and released the grip she had on Tessie; "but that I saw you by the merest accident, you would have lost your life for the sake of the girl who tried to ruin you this morning."

He dragged her several yards away and then returned for Tessie, the hem of whose skirt was now on fire.

He beat out the fire and carried her forward a short distance toward safety.

Alternately he worked the senseless girls toward the end of the long room, with the flames, now in control of the floor, reaching out hungrily after him.

Staggering along, gasping for breath and dizzy from the heat, he slowly drew them nearer to the opening connecting with the fire-escape.

## CHAPTER IX.

### IN THE NAME OF THE LAW.

A big crowd had gathered outside in the street by this time.

The engines were getting into position, and the firemen were bringing up their hose in readiness to turn a number of streams on the blazing factory, the upper floor of which, on the dressing-room side, was rapidly being gutted by the flames.

The fire now having a good headway, it was playing high jinks with that end of the building.

Everybody was believed to have got out of the danger zone, and all efforts were centered on saving as much of the factory as possible.

Great, then, was the astonishment of the crowd that had a clear view of that end of the building when a human figure stumbled out on to the platform of the narrow fire-escape stairs.

Then he seemed to pull himself together, but to everybody's surprise, instead of running down the escape, he dashed back into the burning floor.

"He's mad!" cried a spectator.

"Plum crazy!" said another.

"Who is he?" asked a third.

No one knew at the time, for no one had clearly seen his face.

Two of the firemen started up the fire-escape.

Before they reached the platform Will again appeared at the opening, this time with a burden in his arms.

"Hurrah!" shrieked the mob, in a paroxysm of enthusiasm.

Propping the girl, who was Jessie Fairweather, against the railing, Will vanished into the smoke once more.

The crowd seemed to realize what was meant.

"There's more inside," was passed from mouth to mouth, and all grew quiet with apprehension.

"There he is!" cried one, eagerly, pointing at the opening, which was now more obscure than ever from the smoke.

Another simultaneous yell went up from the crowd, as Will staggered forth, bearing Tessie Rickson in his arms.

By that time the firemen had reached the upper landing. One of them picked up Miss Fairweather, while the other relieved Will of Tessie Rickson, and down the ladder they went, followed by the boy, whose face and hands were black from the stains of smoke, and blistered by the heat.

The surging mob shouted its approval and experienced a great feeling of relief.

While the superintendent was wringing Will by one hand, the vice-president of the company, who had arrived on the ground, was shaking him by the other.

And both were telling him what a brave young fellow he was.

At the same time a crowd of employees of both sexes gathered around the group.

"It's Will Somers!" cried those in a position to see, and his name was passed about from one to another until everybody in the yard knew what the boy had accomplished.

"Isn't he grand!" exclaimed one girl.

"Why, he's a real hero!" said another.

"He saved Jessie Fairweather!"

"And that Rickson girl, too!"

"Just look at his face, the poor fellow!"

Such was the tenor of the remarks in the crowd around Will, who finally made a dive through his admirers and made his way to the engine-room, at the door of which stood the engineer.

In the meantime Jessie Fairweather and Tessie Rickson had been taken in hand by sympathizing friends and brought to their senses.

At first Tessie hardly knew whether she was glad or sorry to find herself alive.

This may seem like an odd statement to make, but then Tessie had her reasons.

In the first place, she had been the cause of the fire.

She had been enraged by the way the girls had treated her that afternoon, for all of them suspected that she was at the bottom of the pocketbook affair, and for the purpose of getting square she had deliberately gone into the dressing-room and set fire to several of the dresses in one corner of the room.

In her anger she did not reflect that she was endangering the building, her idea being to destroy the clothes of those girls who had been particularly conspicuous in their hostile attitude toward her. But she had unwittingly selected a particularly inflammable part of the room.

Consequently the fire spread to the landing outside with great rapidity.

When the alarm was given she ran to the dressing-room to save her own clothes, but was overcome with terror and heat just as Jessie appeared on the scene, and her last recollections were of the brave and unselfish efforts the girl she had injured was making to save her from a fate she was powerless to escape.

She hated to think she actually owed her life to Jessie Fairweather.

When the two girls learned their escape was due to gallant Will Somers they expressed themselves in different ways, characteristic of their dispositions.

Jessie had little to say, while deeply grateful to Will, but Tessie raved over the affair, because it was so like the hero and heroine in the story papers she was accustomed to read.

While the Northport fire department was doing its best to get the flames under control Will Somers interviewed a bucket of water and a bar of castile soap, which, with the assistance of a crash towel, soon made him presentable again.

Many admiring friends gathered at the engine-room to congratulate him personally.

"Oh, come now!" he remonstrated good-naturedly. "Let up on a fellow, won't you? I didn't do such an awful lot, when you come to look it in the face. I simply found the girls lying at the door of the dressing-room, and you don't suppose any one but a savage without a grain of feeling would have left them to perish, do you? Any one of you fellows would have done exactly as I did, under the circumstances, so what's the use of making all this fuss about it? I'm glad I got them out, so that's all there is to it."

"Oh, I don't know," remarked a big operator who worked on the ground floor; "many boys, or men, for that matter, would have thought of number one first of all, and not have taken the chances you did. At any rate, you're all right, Will."

"Bet your life he is!" said another husky fellow admiringly.

"You're the real article, young man," spoke up one of the foremen. "Every day I hear people blow about what they can do or have done, but I like to talk to a party who I know has done something worth while and isn't blowing off about it afterward."

"You hit the nail on the head that time, Buckley," said another employee.

"There's one thing certain," grinned a fifth, "you've got all the girls dead to rights this trip. They'll rave over you for a month."

"Say, don't!" objected Will, with a laugh. "I've only got one-size hats to my name, and I don't want you fellows to swell my head up so I can't wear them."

"No fear of that," said the foreman. "You aren't built that way."

"Is Will Somers here?" asked a voice on the outside at this juncture.

"Sure he is," somebody was heard to say. "What do you want with him, officer? He hain't been stealing some girl's heart, has he?" with a loud guffaw.

As all hands looked toward the doorway the head constable of Northport entered the engine-room.

"How do you do, Will Somers. I am sorry to say my



errand is an unpleasant one; but I have to do my duty. I have a warrant for your arrest."

This unexpected announcement created a profound sensation among those present.

## CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH SQUIRE JARVIS FAILS TO MAKE A CASE AGAINST WILL SOMERS.

"What do you mean, Mr. Brady?" gasped Will Somers in the greatest astonishment.

"I am sorry my duty obliges me to make you my prisoner; but I don't see any way out of it. I'll have to conduct you before Justice Benson."

"But I haven't done anything for which I should be arrested," remonstrated Will.

"I hope you haven't," replied the constable. "It is quite possible some mistake has been made, in which case you will be immediately released."

"There certainly is a mistake," said the boy, stoutly.

"You don't look at all like a guilty boy," said the constable, with a smile.

"I should think not. All right; I'm ready to face the music."

"What's the charge, Mr. Brady?" asked Mr. Davis, the engineer.

"I regret to say it's a very serious one," replied the officer, soberly.

"You don't mean to say this boy is accused of murdering somebody, do you?" said the engineer, with a contemptuous laugh.

"Hardly as bad as that," answered the officer, who saw that, officially, he was not favorably regarded by Will's friends.

"Well, what am I charged with?" asked the boy.

"Burglary!"

"Who made such a preposterous charge against this boy?" demanded Mr. Davis.

"Squire Jarvis."

That was the second surprise, but it was evidently a serious one.

Surely the magnate of Northport would not make such an accusation without some ground to base it on.

No one had heard that a burglary had been committed on the Jarvis premises.

But suppose such had been the case, in what way was Will Somers, one of the brightest and most respected lads in town, connected with it?

That was the question each one in the engine-room asked himself as he looked at Will's honest face and then at the officer.

"I suppose you have the warrant with you?" asked Mr. Davis.

"I have," answered the constable. "Do you wish to see it?"

"Yes."

Constable Brady produced it, and the engineer found it was made out in proper form.

"I shall be ready to go along with you as soon as I get out of my working clothes," said Will; "but I guess the Squire will find he has made a serious blunder in bringing this charge against me."

"Well, I hope you will get out of it all right. It's no pleasure for me to come after you in my official capacity. Your father was a good friend of mine, and this job is not at all to my liking."

"I have no fault to find with you, Constable Brady," said the boy, as he slipped off his overalls.

In a few moments he was ready to go with the officer.

So, while the factory fire, which was now under control, held the attention of almost everybody in the vicinity, Will Somers and Constable Brady left the yard by a back gate and proceeded to the courthouse, where the officer said the justice was waiting to hold a sort of informal examination of the charge.

Will was conducted to Justice Benson's office and directed to take a seat.

Besides Mr. Benson, the most prominent person in the room was Squire Jarvis, who gave the prisoner a severe, unpromising look.

The gardener of the Jarvis establishment was also present.

"Will Somers, I am sorry to have you brought before me on a criminal charge, especially one so serious as the warrant indicates; but I have no doubt you will be able to clear yourself, at least I trust so," and Justice Benson looked kindly at the manly young fellow, whom he had known from

his infancy, and who did not at all look like a boy capable of committing an unworthy action.

Squire Jarvis sniffed at Mr. Benson's encouraging view of the situation, and thumped the floor with his gold-headed cane, as though to express his disapprobation.

"I want you to understand, Master Somers, that this examination is entirely informal," continued the justice, "and that you are not compelled to say a word unless you choose to do so. But if you do say anything, I warn you that you are not obliged to commit yourself, and that whatever you say may be used against you."

"If he wants to confess he had better do so now," said the magnate, impatiently.

"You are rather hasty, Squire Jarvis. The boy has not yet been informed in detail of the charge against him."

"Pooh! He knows about it better than any of us," sneered the nabob, casting a black look at Will.

"Squire Jarvis, that remark is hardly a fair one," objected the justice, who was clearly favorably disposed toward the prisoner.

"Pooh!" and the lawyer thumped the floor once more.

"Listen to me, Master Somers," said Justice Benson. "Between the hours of eleven last night and six this morning, Squire Jarvis' office, an extension of his residence, was forcibly entered, his desk pried open, and several papers, including a ten-dollar bill, were abstracted. You are charged with the crime. Do you wish to make any statement?"

"I wish to say that I know nothing whatever about the matter. This is the first I have heard of it. I was in bed and asleep between the hours mentioned."

This general denial of the charge was received by the Squire and his son, who was also present, with sneering disapproval.

"Then," remarked the justice, "if this case ever comes up in court you ought to be able to prove an alibi."

"I think the prisoner would find it a rather difficult matter to prove to the satisfaction of a judge and jury that he was in bed every moment of the time within which it was possible for him to commit this crime," said the Squire, acidly.

"You seem to be greatly prejudiced against this boy," observed Justice Benson.

"Huh!" snorted the nabob, moving about in his chair.

Mr. Benson took up a hammer and a cold chisel which had been lying on his desk, and asked the constable to hand them to Will.

"Have you ever seen those implements before?" he inquired.

The boy looked them over and then answered promptly:

"Yes, sir; they belonged to my father, for his name is upon them."

"Can you assign any reason for their having been found this morning on the floor of Squire Jarvis' office?"

"The only explanation I can offer in this: They were abstracted from our tool-house last night about eleven o'clock by Ed Rickson—"

"Who?" demanded Squire Jarvis, jumping to his feet.

"Ed Rickson."

"What tomfoolery is this? He hasn't been in this neighborhood this two years back," snorted the nabob, angrily.

"I know that," answered Will, calmly, "but the fact that I saw him enter our tool-house last night through the window, and leave with something in his pockets, shows that he has returned."

"I don't believe any such rot," said the great man, rudely.

"Softly, Squire Jarvis. You should not attack the lad's veracity in this way. He is entitled to make whatever explanation he sees fit, and it is quite possible that he speaks the truth. Go on, Master Somers."

"I tried to head him off, but he jumped the fence and got away."

"If Ed Rickson had come back to town I fancy I should have heard of it," said the magnate with an incredulous smile. "For I was speaking to Mr. Rickson at noon to-day, and he made no mention of the circumstance."

"You cannot be ignorant of the fact that Edward Rickson did not bear a very good reputation while he lived in Northport," said Justice Benson, meaningly. "If we accept Master Somers' statement of his encounter with that young man last night, it certainly casts a shade of suspicion in a direction it might be well to follow up. If Edward Rickson did enter the Somers tool-house, as the accused asserts, I presume he is willing to swear to it in court," and the magistrate glanced inquiringly at Will.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy promptly.

"Then," continued the justice, "he must have had some



object in doing so. Had the object been a worthy one, it seems to me the owner of the tool-house would have been consulted. As the tools found in your office this morning have been identified by the accused as the property of his family, and as it has not been shown that Master Somers carried them there himself, why the inference——"

"I beg to say that we are not dealing with inferences," said the Squire, stiffly.

"Can you prove that the accused entered your office with these tools?" asked Justice Benson rather sharply.

"If I could there would be no necessity for this rigma-role," replied the Squire, a bit disconcerted. "But I can show with sufficient clearness that this Somers boy had a well-defined object in breaking into my place and rifling my desk."

"From which I presume you draw an inference of his guilt," said the justice, with a smile, laying stress on the word inference, much to the nabob's annoyance.

"I believe it will establish a strong presumption in that direction," persisted the great man.

"I will hear what you have to say, Squire Jarvis," said Justice Benson, quietly.

"The only thing of importance taken from my desk," proceeded the nabob, punctuating his sentences with a downward movement of his extended index finger, "was a certain paper, or, to be more explicit, a note of hand deposited with me yesterday by Mr. Job Rickson for collection. This paper would not be the slightest use or value to Ed Rickson, assuming for the sake of illustration that it was he who broke into my office; but, sir, its destruction would be of the greatest importance to the pecuniary interests of the Somers family, inasmuch as it represents an unsettled claim against their property."

"Mr. Benson," interrupted Will, springing to his feet, "I deny Squire Jarvis' statement that the note to which he refers represents an unsettled claim against my mother. The note was paid by my father before his death, and the attempt now made by Mr. Rickson, through Squire Jarvis, to collect it over again is a rank swindle."

"Master Somers," said the justice, mildly, "you must not interrupt Squire Jarvis while he is speaking. Whatever you have to say about this matter I will hear after the Squire has finished."

"The note in question," continued the magnate, casting a supercilious glance at the boy, "is a promissory one, for the sum of three hundred dollars, drawn in favor of Job Rickson, and signed by Nathaniel Somers. Together with unpaid interest to date it represents a perfect legal claim against the drawer's estate of four hundred and twenty-five dollars. This is the vital point I wish to impress upon your attention, Mr. Benson. The other papers, as well as the ten-dollar bill, I believe were merely taken as a blind. It is fortunate that the thief, owing to the hurry of the moment, perfectly natural to one unaccustomed to the commission of crime, forgot to take away the implements he brought with him to accomplish his object."

"I believe you have a safe in your office, Squire Jarvis?" said the justice.

"I have."

"I should think, then, that would have been the proper place for you to have kept that note."

"I can explain why I did not have it in the safe last night," said the lawyer, pompously. "I called with that note on Mrs. Somers last evening about eight o'clock for the purpose of arranging with her as to its payment."

"And mother contested it on the ground that it had already been paid once, a fact we could prove only that the receipt has been mislaid or lost," broke in Will, impetuously.

"Go on, Squire Jarvis," said Mr. Benson, overlooking the interruption.

"It was rather late when I returned home, and not caring to take the trouble to unlock my safe, I opened my desk and slipped it into one of the pigeon-holes. I naturally had no suspicion that any one was likely to break into my office during the night—certainly no one interested in that particular bit of paper. It seems I was mistaken," concluded the lawyer, grimly, as he sat down again.

"That is all you have to say, Squire?"

"That is all; I think it is conclusive," gazing around with a satisfied expression, "when taken in connection with the testimony of my gardener, whom I will now bring forward."

Jobbings, the gardener, testified to the following facts: That he had found the outside door of the Squire's office ajar that morning at six o'clock, and on examination found that it had clearly been broken in by a cold-chisel, or similar in-

strument; that he entered the office, and found evidence that the Squire's desk had also been tampered with; that he had found the hammer and cold-chisel, which he now identified as the articles in question, on the carpet beside the justice's desk; that he immediately aroused his employer and notified him of the circumstances.

"Have you anything further to say, Master Somers?" asked the justice, gazing at the boy, whose honest face and straightforward manner favorably impressed him.

"No, sir," replied Will, fearlessly.

"I should think not," said Squire Jarvis, offensively, glaring at the lad. "I presume you will permit the prisoner to stand trial——"

"I am afraid," said Justice Benson, interrupting him, "that the evidence is not sufficient to warrant holding the boy."

"Sir!" exclaimed the Squire, in some astonishment.

"I am surprised that you, a lawyer, in view of the lack of evidence, even of a circumstantial nature, should insist on such a course, which, in the event that you afterward failed to make out a true case, would make you liable to be proceeded against in a civil suit for damages. Will Somers, you are discharged."

"Thank you, Mr. Benson," and putting on his hat, he walked out of the justice's office a very happy boy.

## CHAPTER XI.

FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ABOUT WILL SOMERS' GAME OF CHANCE.

When Will Somers got back to the factory that afternoon he found the fire had been put out and the engines gone.

A solitary representative of the fire department stood on guard at the main entrance, and a few curious spectators hung about the neighborhood gazing up at the ruin of the third story.

Superintendent Harper and an insurance adjuster were figuring out the loss in the office.

All the employees, with the exception of the engineer and a few of the yardmen, had departed.

"Hello, Bill!" exclaimed Mr. Davis when the boy walked into the engine-room. "Back again, eh? Got out of your scrape, all right?"

"Yes, sir," answered Will, cheerily.

"That's good. What was it all about, anyway?"

Will told him the whole story.

"The Squire seems to have it in for you," commented the engineer.

"I don't seem to be an especial favorite of his, that's a fact," replied the boy with a cheerful grin.

"That's right; but I wouldn't let that fact worry you any."

"I don't mean that it shall."

"Ed Rickson is at the bottom of that affair," said Mr. Davis, nodding his head sagely.

"I should not be surprised," said Will.

"He always was a hard nut," said Mr. Davis; "but I never knew before that he was a thief. His two years' absence has not reformed him, I see. I'm afraid it has only developed his criminal instincts."

"His father's reputation isn't anything to brag about. This swindle he is trying to work on my mother only serves to confirm my opinion of the man. The idea of him keeping that note all these years in the background, and then ringing it in on us at the last minute on the chance that we couldn't produce the receipt he gave to father for the money! That shows you what kind of a man he is," said the boy, indignantly.

"Squire Jarvis can't but have some suspicion of the truth. It doesn't speak well for him to support a fraud."

"Mr. Rickson has probably promised him a large commission to collect the note."

"Such a proposal as that should be enough to arouse any lawyer's doubts, especially after your mother affirmed the note had already been paid, and Mr. Rickson had allowed it to run so many years after maturity without presenting it for payment."

"That's right. It has all the earmarks of a skin on the face of it."

"Now that the note has disappeared, it is possible you may never hear from it again," suggested the engineer, encouragingly.

"I don't know about that," said Will, doubtfully. "Ed Rickson may return it to his father, as it is of value to him. He could do that by mail, if he's afraid to show himself at his home. What gets me is why he entered the Squire's



office at all. He couldn't expect to get any money without breaking into the safe, and he certainly was not provided with tools for such a purpose. The ten-dollar bill he got just happened to be in the desk."

"It would only be wasted time to figure upon what his object was," said the engineer as he relighted his pipe. "He had one, no doubt, and it will probably come to light if he should ever be caught."

"I don't believe Squire Jarvis will make any complaint against him," intimated Will. "His efforts were all directed to fasten the crime on me. Lewis is dead sore on me, too, and I think that's the secret of his father's ill-will."

"Very likely. You might as well go home, Will. It's half-past four, and there's nothing for you to do around here."

"All right. Guess I'll go and take a look at my dam. It's pretty near time I had it repaired."

"Say, young man," said the engineer, curiously, "what are you up to, anyway? What are you going to make out of that swamp-lot? You aren't such a fool as to try the same dodge Rickson monkeyed with, are you?"

"What makes you ask?" said Will with a grin.

"Because I'm curious to learn what your little game is. Rickson figured on making a small fortune out of an ice privilege by damming the outlet of the swamp and making a swamp out of the ten acres. The idea was certainly ingenious, but the conformation of the bog knocked his scheme on the head. He was badly disappointed. The next thing I heard was that you, with all your smartness, had paid him twenty-five dollars for a clear title to the place, which, in my opinion, isn't worth a cent."

"I know you said so when I first admitted to you that I had purchased it. But that's where you and I differ."

"We certainly do," replied the engineer, positively. "Are you going to fill it in and try to reclaim the land?" with a grin. "Kind of foolish thing to attempt, when people say it hasn't any bottom. Those stones you dumped on the frozen surface last winter are probably coming out in China, or somewhere else, by this time. Better let the place alone and devote your time to engineering, where your talent lies."

"It is possible I may surprise you with that swamp-lot yet, Mr. Davis. I'm working a scheme—a sort of game of chance my brain is playing against the perverseness of nature. You ought to know that a large proportion of success in this world is the outcome of chance, anyway. Rickson was sure he was going to succeed. When he failed he threw the whole thing up in disgust, without investigating the cause that threw him down. I didn't get on to it at first myself, but after a little while I saw through it. Then I began to figure out how the real difficulty might be overcome, just as I have worked my brains to try to produce a successful new damper regulator, or my steam condenser which you have just applied to that boiler—see?"

The engineer nodded and began to look interested.

"I may fail and get the grand laugh," continued Will, though his eyes sparkled with the enthusiasm of the hopeful inventor, "but I am satisfied I am working along correct lines. If I fail this winter the character of the failure will determine whether I shall make another attempt or let the whole matter go by the board. I have thoroughly investigated the quality and consistency of that swamp grass. That was the most important step in the scheme. Once I was satisfied my idea was feasible I went ahead. The chief element of chance in my mind lies in the uncertain course nature may pursue when the water is prevented from escaping."

"You know what occurred the last time this was done."

"Exactly. My scheme is to offset a repetition of that occurrence."

"That's a sensible idea, I'll admit. How do you propose to overcome this difficulty?" asked the engineer, now thoroughly interested.

"That's my secret, Mr. Davis, and I hope you won't feel sore because I prefer to keep you in the dark about it for the present. I've only told one person, and she——"

"Your mother, I suppose," said the engineer.

"No, I haven't explained the matter to my mother, because if I happen to be successful I shall be able to work a very pleasant surprise on her."

"Then, who is the 'she'?" asked Mr. Davis, tantalizingly.

"Oh, it's a girl——"

"I don't suppose the 'she' was a boy," grinned the engineer.

"I mean she's a particular friend of mine," said Will, flushing to his hair.

"Oh, I see. You mean the prettiest girl in the factory—Jessie Fairweather."

"Well, maybe I do," admitted the boy, reluctantly.

"You needn't be ashamed to acknowledge it, Will Somers. She's the brightest girl in Northport, just as you are the smartest boy. If I had the picking out of a girl for you she'd be the first choice. You two are well matched. I hope one of these days to see——"

"Good-night," said Will, hastily. "I'm off."

And the honest old engineer shook with quiet laughter as the boy made a sudden break for the door and disappeared.

## CHAPTER XII.

### REPAIRING THE DAM AT THE MOUTH OF THE SWAMP-LOT.

For the next day or two, while the first and second stories of the factory were being cleaned up and put into shape for the resumption of work in those departments of the building, Will had nothing to do in the engine-room of the Northport cotton mills.

So he took advantage of the opportunity to repair the dam at the swamp-lot.

He did not do this all by himself, but induced a particular friend, named Sam Travis, to give him a helping hand.

They took a number of substantial boards and the necessary tools, and went out to the grewsome spot.

The water was running freely through the opening Will had made after he had completed his self-imposed job of distributing the heavy stones over the frozen surface of the bog.

"So you think you'll have an ice privilege for sale this winter, do you, Will?" said Sam Travis, with an incredulous grin.

"It is possible I may," replied Will, tersely.

"Nit!" ejaculated his companion. "Old Rickson tried the experiment last winter, and he got badly roasted. I didn't think you was such a chump as to tackle the same scheme."

"Well, Sam, we can't all be wise in this world, you know," replied Will, with a cheerful laugh. "Perhaps I'm only doing this for fun—just to put in my time, you know."

"Yes, you are like fun," grinned Travis. "I see you doing such a thing. No; you mean business, all right. But, hang me, if I didn't give you credit for more brains."

"Thanks, Sam, for the compliment," said Will, with the utmost good nature.

"You're welcome."

"Well, now, since you've had your little say, s'pose you get busy. Hand me one of those boards. You stand here and hold your end until I get it straight, and then drive half a dozen of those nails to hold it in place."

"All right, old man; only it's an awful waste of good lumber, nails and energy."

"You will let me be the judge of that, Sam."

"Sure; it's your funeral, not mine."

"If you don't watch where you're putting your feet it may be your funeral, first thing you know," said Will with a grin, as one of Sam's legs slipped and went down into the ooze in a very unpleasant manner.

"Thanks for the warning, old chappie, but I'm not taking a mud bath to-day," snickered Sam, with a rueful look at the bottom of his trousers leg.

"Mud baths, they say, are good for rheumatism."

"Then old Rickson ought to come over here and take a course of treatment."

"He's had all he wants to do with this place, I guess," chuckled Will.

"There'll be others in the sweet by and by, too," snickered Sam.

"You're a Job's comforter, Sam."

"Think so? You know what the immortal Shakespeare said, don't you?"

"He said, or rather he wrote, a good many bright things. What particular one do you refer to?" asked Will, beginning to nail the end of the plank.

"Suffering jewsharps!" howled Sam, as the business end of the hammer came in sudden contact with his thumb as he started to drive in his second nail.

"That's what he said, was it?" said Will, laughing shyly.

"What you laughing at? Think it funny, don't you?" in an aggrieved tone of voice. "Hang the old thing! Why couldn't it go in straight?" sucking at his injured digit.



"You should have taken aim at the head of the nail, not at your thumb."

"Go bag your head, will you?" growled Sam, with pretended indignation.

"How about what Shakespeare said?" persisted Will, after driving home his last nail.

"That whack knocked it all out of my head," he said as he also finished nailing up his end. "Want another board?"

"Yes."

"All right; here you are," and he pushed over the end of the second board. "Did you hear what happened to Stubbins when he was up to Boston?"

"No; what happened to him?" asked Will, curiously.

"He attended an Adams Express Company sale and bid in a box labeled 'dry goods.' What do you s'pose he found in it?"

"A bundle of calico, I guess, or something of that sort."

"Not on your life. He found six bound volumes of the Congressional Record," snickered Sam.

"That isn't so bad for you, Sam; but I wouldn't do it again if I were you."

"Can't help it; runs in our family. Dad and I were talking politics the other night, and I asked him what a political ring was made of, and he said 'steal.' Wouldn't that jar you? Have another board?" grinned Sam.

"Pass it along."

"By the way, Will," said Sam, after a few minutes of silence, "I heard to-day that the selectmen were going to give you a medal for your heroic conduct at the factory fire in saving the lives of Tessie Rickson and Jessie Fairweather."

"Nonsense!"

"It's a fact, and the only committeeman who voted against the proposition was Squire Jarvis. He still claims it was you who broke into his office to get hold of a certain promissory note that he had presented to your mother for payment. Nobody takes any stock in that, though. Constable Brady is on a still hunt after Ed Rickson, all right, and if he catches him I guess there will be something doing."

Will rather objected to a public acknowledgment of his noteworthy action at the factory fire, with the natural modesty of the true hero, but nevertheless he could not but feel flattered at the honor which his townsmen proposed to confer on him.

Both Jessie and her mother had thanked him with such feeling and earnestness that there could be no doubt of their gratitude for the service he had rendered them.

He felt this expression on their part amply repaid him for whatever risk he had run in Miss Fairweather's behalf.

As for Tessie Rickson, she had made a special visit at the Somers cottage to tell Will and his mother how much she appreciated his conduct on that thrilling occasion when, as she glowingly expressed it, "her life hung on a hair."

Before she tore herself away, with evident reluctance, she had used up all the adjectives of her limited vocabulary.

"Well," said Will, after he and the sturdy Sam had worked for more than an hour on the dam, "I guess that will do. Very little water will get through here now. In a week I shall begin to get some idea how things are going to pan out."

"You mean that in a week you'll begin to discover what a chump you are," grinned his companion.

"All right, have your own way," returned the hopeful young inventor.

"And you really do expect to make a pond here?" said Sam incredulously.

"That's what I hope to accomplish."

"You'll have a pond, all right, but the water will be out of sight."

"That's just where we differ; I'm looking for it to show on top."

"That's what Rickson looked for, but it didn't do him any good. If the water pushed that grass up once it's going to do it again."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Of course I am; it stands to reason that it will."

"If you wanted to find out the depth of that old dry well in your back yard without going down into it, how would you proceed?"

"That's simple. I'd drop a stone down and count the seconds that elapsed till it struck bottom," said Sam, pleased to display his knowledge of natural philosophy.

"I'd tie a string to the stone and measure the string afterward," said Will. "That shows you we look at the same thing from a different point of view."

"Huh! Any fool could measure a well that way," said Sam contemptuously.

"I've just taken as simple a way to make a pond here, the only difference between the two is that this is a game of chance."

"Oh, you haven't the least chance in the world," replied Sam. Then they gathered up the tools and left the spot.

### CHAPTER XIII.

ED RICKSON TURNS UP AGAIN UNDER PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Bugle and the News, the two weekly papers of Northport, came out that afternoon with a column account of the factory fire, and the Bugle, in particular, praised Will Somers' heroism to the top notch.

Both papers also published notices of the project afoot to present the boy with a medal as a mark of the town's appreciation, though the matter in the Times was dismissed with a three-line item in the locals.

In addition, each paper printed a report of Will's arrest and examination before Justice Benson, on the charge of breaking into Squire Jarvis' office and stealing certain papers from his desk.

The Bugle's story was brief and the charge commented on as baseless.

On the other hand, the Times, the editor of which was a personal and political friend of Squire Jarvis, gave considerable space to the affair; but while the writer was careful to say nothing which could be construed as a reflection on the lad's honesty, nevertheless he scouted the idea that Ed Rickson was in any way implicated in the crime.

On Monday morning Will returned to duty in the engine-room, as the first and second floors of the factory were in shape to resume operation.

Nothing had been heard from Squire Jarvis in respect to the promissory note.

This, of course, was a matter of no surprise to Mrs. Somers or her son, for it was not supposed that any action could be taken until the missing note should have been recovered.

A thorough search for the mislaid receipt had proved unavailing.

In spite of the fact that Sam Travis regarded the flooding of the swamp as a hare-brain sort of proposition, nevertheless he was, boy-like, interested in the prospect, if only for the purpose of being the first to give his friend Will the laugh as soon as he had assured himself that the scheme was a failure, as he confidently expected that it must prove to be.

So, during the week that followed the repairing of the dam, he made daily visits to the ten-acre bog after school.

As a matter of course, the change, if any, in that short time in the appearance of the swamp was not so perceptible to him as if he had waited a week and then inspected it.

So at the end of eight days he reported to Will that the bog had not changed, even a little bit.

"You are quite certain of that?" asked Will, with a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"Sure thing," asserted Sam, shaking his head dismally. "Same old grass and moss, though it looks a bit more soggy. There are a lot of little pools here and there, but that don't count for anything."

"Well, I'm going out to take a look myself to-night. The moon will be up after eight o'clock, and there should be light enough for me to see all I want."

So after supper Will started off alone for the swamp-plot to size up the appearance of his game of chance.

He had arrived within a hundred yards of the place when he heard some one shouting in accents of terror, and the appeal undoubtedly came from the immediate vicinity of the quaking bog.

"Somebody must have got caught in the swamp. It's as bad as quicksand," he said, as he broke into a run.

The moon was just rising about the tops of the trees that partially surrounded the swamp-plot, so that the boy could easily see over the whole surface of the bog.

The call for help sounded in the vicinity of the dam, and thither Will directed his steps.

He soon made out a dark object floundering about on the surface of the swamp a few yards out.

"Hello!" he shouted encouragingly.

"Help! Help!" answered the unfortunate being.

A long, broken limb was hanging pendant from a tree near by.

The boy seized it, and by a stout pull disengaged it from the heavy limb on which it had grown.

Then he ran down to the edge of the morass, called to the struggling person imprisoned by the matted grass, and flung one end of the improvised pole toward him.



The luckless person grabbed it as a drowning man might a plank, and held on with desperate energy until Will succeeded in dragging him to the firm ground.

"Give me both your hands now!" cried the boy.

They were eagerly extended to him.

Planting his feet firmly, Will gave a mighty tug, the person's feet were suddenly released by the grass, and both rolled over together on the dry turf beyond the danger line.

They immediately struggled to their feet and looked at one another.

The moon shone full in the face of the rescued stranger.

Will recognized him instantly.

"Ed Rickson!" he exclaimed.

The fellow hastily scrambled to his feet without a word, and made a movement as if about to flee.

"Hold on, Rickson. You needn't be in such a sweat. I'm all alone," said Will.

Rickson paused and looked keenly at the boy, and then gave a short laugh, as if somewhat reassured.

"Oh, it's you, Somers, is it?"

"It isn't anybody else. Where have you been hiding these last ten days?"

"Who says I've been hiding?" said Rickson gruffly.

"I say so, for one. And there are others."

"Look here, Will Somers, do you want to do me a favor?"

"I think I've just done one for you," said the boy, grimly.

"That's right, you have; but I want you to do something else for me."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Will cautiously.

"I'm kind of fagged out. Haven't had a mouthful to-day? Will you fetch me something to eat and promise you won't say anything about having seen me out here?"

"You have got a pretty good nerve, I think, after what I've gone through on your account already."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Rickson sharply.

"You used those tools you stole from our place to break into Squire Jarvis' office. Then you left them in the place, and so I was accused of doing the job, because a certain paper we are supposed to be interested in was found missing."

Ed Rickson grinned as though he had just heard a good joke.

"Oh, well, no harm came of it. Everybody knows you're a little angel who wouldn't be guilty of such a thing," he replied, with a palpable sneer. "A fellow who goes to Sunday-school and meeting regularly never goes wrong, of course not. Canada is full of those kind of chaps."

"If you are so anxious to do me a favor you are taking a strange way to get me to accommodate you," said Will, in a tone of disgust at Rickson's coarse humor.

"Only a joke," the now wretched-looking wanderer answered hastily, as if suddenly conscious that he had gone too far. "For heaven's sake, get me a bite of something to eat. I'm almost starved."

He certainly looked it, and there was a pathetic earnestness about his request that easily assured Will that Rickson told the truth.

"Well," said the boy, "I can't refuse a hungry man something to eat; but it'll take me some little time to get it here."

"You won't tell any one you've met me here, will you?" asked Rickson anxiously.

"I shan't volunteer the information."

"And you promise not to fetch anybody back with you? I shall be on the watch, so it won't do any good."

"I'll return alone," said Will coldly.

"I wish you'd fetch a blanket with you, if you could, for it's mighty cold hanging around here, especially when a fellow's trousers are soaked to the skin," said Rickson dismally.

"Where do you sleep?" asked Will, as he prepared to depart on his charitable errand.

"I've got a snug place," he replied, with one of his impudent grins. "Now, don't be any longer than you can help, Somers, if you've got a spark of feeling for a fellow in my condition," and Rickson contorted his countenance into an expression of great physical anguish in order to give additional effect to his appeal.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### WILL SOMERS LEARNS SOME INTERESTING FACTS.

Will was as good as his word, and half an hour later returned to the ten-acre swamp-plot with a liberal supply of plain food, which his mother had provided at his request, without asking any questions he could not answer. He had it wrapped up in a newspaper, the which tucked into the folds of an old horse-blanket.

When Will struck the open space facing the bog, where he had held his brief conversation with the disreputable son of Job Rickson, he found no one in sight.

"He couldn't have got tired waiting, for I wasn't so very long away," thought the kind-hearted boy, as he transferred his bundle from one arm to the other. "Well, it's his lookout, so while I'm waiting for him I'll take a look at the swamp."

So he walked slowly along the edge of the quaking bog, examining its surface with the greatest attention and interest.

He had taken care to gauge the original height of the marsh before he began to flood it, marking its level by means of sticks thrust horizontally out from the sides of the basin.

By looking at these guides he saw that so far the swamp itself had not risen to any noticeable extent.

This was encouraging, though not conclusive evidence that his scheme would eventually be successful.

The water was certainly forming on top of the matted grass. A hundred little pools were visible upon its surface, which looked very watery and glistened in the cold moonshine.

"I don't think I can find any reason to kick so far," mused Will, with a sense of satisfaction. "In another week I hope to see a clear enough, though perhaps shallow, sheet of water above the grass. Well, the saying is, nothing ventured, nothing won. You have got to take chances in this world if you expect to do something worth while."

At this point in his reflections he fancied he heard the sound of voices somewhere near at hand.

He was standing at the side of the swamp opposite the outlet where the dam was.

He listened.

It was the first of November and the country air was quite still.

There was scarcely a breath of air stirring, and the bare trees stood silent and motionless in the moonlight.

"Somebody is talking, all right," said Will to himself, "which is a pretty good sign he isn't alone. I wonder if that can be Rickson? If so, who is he talking with? He seemed to be mighty skerry about any one knowing he was out here. Well, that's his business, not mine."

Will walked on a little further, and the sounds grew plainer.

"That's Rickson talking, for a fact. Evidently he has run across some friends he isn't afraid of."

The boy sat down on the stump of a tree, and now the voices reached his ear quite plainly.

"Look here, Lewis," said Rickson, roughly, as if he was out of patience, "I've stood your shillyshallying long enough. I want that money you promised me, and if you don't stump up by this time to-morrow night I'll not only find means of letting your father know the truth of the matter, but I'll put Will Somers wise to the whole thing also."

"You wouldn't dare!" ejaculated Jarvis, for it was indeed the son of the proprietor of Northport who was holding converse with Ed Rickson in the shade of the trees.

"Wouldn't I? You evidently don't know me, young fellow. You see the trouble I've got into all on your account. I don't dare to show my face lest I be arrested for the crime you intended to fasten on Will Somers."

"If you hadn't been such a fool that night when you broke in Somers' tool-house to get those tools, and let him recognize you, he never would have been able to throw suspicion in your direction."

"He came on me so suddenly that he took me by surprise. I supposed everybody was in bed and asleep," said Rickson in excuse.

"You should have waited an hour or two longer, anyway. You spoiled everything by your haste. If the plan had succeeded, as I supposed it would when I proposed the thing to you when I met you in Gateville, I would have given you the money right away. It wasn't my fault you tangled things up the way you did."

"Well, I've earned the price we agreed on, and I'm going to have it, or somebody will have to suffer; that's all there is to it," said Ed Rickson doggedly.

"You haven't earned it, for the scheme failed. Nobody outside of my father believes Will Somers guilty of breaking into the governor's office, and I wouldn't be surprised if my father has his suspicions."

"He'll have more than that if you don't fork over that hundred dollars you promised me," said Rickson, in a threatening tone.

"I'll give you twenty-five dollars to-morrow."

"No, you won't. You'll give me the hundred. Do you understand? I'm sorry I went into the thing, anyway. Somers isn't a half bad sort of chap. He pulled me out of the swamp



here an hour ago, and I expect him back with some grub, something that I need as badly as any man alive. Next time you want any dirty work done, just lock up somebody else to do it. If it was to give you away to Somers he'd probably thump the stuffing out of you, and 'twould serve you right."

"He'd thump nothing out of me," sneered Lewis angrily. "I hate the pauper. I'd have given a hundred dollars willingly to have seen him gone to jail."

"For a crime he is innocent of, eh?" said Rickson, with a sneer. "You're a peach."

"That's none of your business!" retorted his companion, in an ugly tone.

"All right. Cough up the hundred dollars and we'll let it go at that. I'll let you have the papers back, and you can say you found them in the grass outside your house. If you fail me, young fellow, you'll find yourself in a heap of trouble."

"I'll have you arrested if you dare to do anything like that!" cried Lewis hotly.

"You will, you little monkey!" exclaimed Rickson, grabbing him by the arm. "I've a great mind to chuck you into the marsh."

"Let me go, will you!"

"Are you going to fetch me that hundred dollars?"

"Yes, I'll give it to you."

"Then see that you turn up here to-morrow night with the cash. If you try to trick me I'll make you suffer in a way that you won't soon forget."

Lewis muttered something under his breath and then walked off under the trees.

A moment later Will Somers saw Rickson pushing his way through the bushes toward the open spot of their encounter an hour previous.

So he rose from his seat and followed him.

When Rickson came out into the moonlight he discovered Will within a few yards of him.

"Hello!" he said, with a hungry glance at the bundle. "You've fetched the grub, have you! Let's have it."

Will relinquished possession of the blanket and its contents.

Rickson unrolled the bundle, cast the blanket on the ground, and attacked the package of food with the greediness of a famished hyena.

"Somers, you're all right," said Rickson, with his mouth full.

"I wish I could return the compliment," replied Will coldly. "You stole a hammer and chisel from our tool-house for the deliberate purpose of getting me into trouble."

"Who says I did?" replied Rickson, with a malicious grin.

"I say so."

"You're off your base, Somers."

"Am I? Perhaps you'll not admit that Lewis Jarvis hired you to execute the job?"

"You're dreaming, boy!"

"Look here, Rickson; I think I've treated you pretty white. I pulled you out of a bad hole and brought you a square feed. Why don't you own up?"

"Nothing doing," grinned Ed.

"Then I've got nothing more to say," said Will, turning on his heel and starting off.

Ed Rickson allowed him to go without another word.

"A nice pair, he and Lewis Jarvis," muttered Will as he walked slowly homeward. "A rascally piece of business for the son of Northport's most prominent citizen and such a reckless scamp as Ed Rickson to engage in, to try and down a boy who never did either of them any harm. Rickson has that note in his possession, so I'll just give Constable Brady a quiet tip that these two conspirators have arranged to meet in the vicinity of the ten-acre swamp-plot to-morrow night. It is not impossible that Lewis Jarvis may find that his little scheme has developed into a boomerang, which may land him and his side partner in jail on a very serious charge. It's a poor rule that doesn't work both ways."

## CHAPTER XV.

### LEWIS JARVIS ORIGINATES ANOTHER SCHEME.

On the following evening Constable Brady and an assistant visited the woods about the ten-acre swamp-plot, but failed to find any trace of Ed Rickson or his associate in iniquity.

So the matter rested for the present.

During the next ten days evidence of the successful flooding of the swamp-plot was so apparent that even Sam Travis hauled in his horns, and said to all his friends that if there

was a smarter boy in Northport than Will Somers he'd like to make his acquaintance.

Will's silly attempt to fill up the bog with stones the preceding winter, which everybody who had heard about the matter supposed to be his object, had been generally forgotten.

Now, however, when it began to be known that a pond had actually formed in the basin of the swamp-plot, scores of curious townspeople tramped out to the spot to see the miracle with their own eyes.

There it was, sure enough.

It was a fine pond of water, and was daily growing deeper.

Somebody carried the news to Job Rickson:

"Ridiculous!" was his comment.

"But I've just seen it with my own eyes," protested his informant, rather glad than otherwise to rub it in on the old fellow who was so generally disliked.

"Pooh! You can't tell me any such nonsense," grunted the man who had already burned his fingers with the scheme of originating an ice privilege.

"It seems that Will Somers has the bulge on you, after all," said a neighbor who had also come to inspect the marvel, rubbing his hands gleefully, as if Rickson's take-down particularly pleased him.

At first Job Rickson was too much astonished to speak.

He could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes.

But after a while he began to realize that somehow nature had turned him down in favor of the young fireman of the Northport cotton mills.

When Will first took hold of the scheme the person who most persistently jeered him was Lewis Jarvis.

"What else can you expect from such a lobster?" was his sneering comment.

Then, as time went on, he, like others, forgot all about the matter.

Now its revival as a successful issue jarred on his feelings.

He refused to believe all reports concerning the actual flooding of the swamp-plot, until the Northport papers printed a news item on the subject; then he went out to the site of the quaking bog himself, and what he saw did not make him feel happy.

He comprehended that the young mechanic he despised so much had managed to solve a very clever problem.

"I never saw such a piece of luck," he muttered in a tone of disgust. "When that water freezes through the pauper will have a regular ice harvest to dispose of. It's a shame how luck will play into the hands of the common people. Why, that beggar will think he's as good as I am. If I only knew some way to head him off."

He was standing near the dam, and as he spoke an idea suddenly came into his head that pleased him greatly.

"'Twill be just the thing," he grinned malevolently. "By the great hornspoon! I'll take him down a couple of pegs. It'll break him all up to have his great scheme go up in the air at the last moment. This is better than if I had landed him in jail, for he was bound to get clear of that in the end; but this—well, this will pickle his hopes in great shape. It'll be a dead easy cinch for Ed Rickson to earn another twenty-five bones. Then I guess it'll be time for me to find that note and hand it over to the governor. He'll do the rest. Nothing like rubbing it in good and hard when you get the chance."

That afternoon Lewis Jarvis took a train for a certain town thirty miles away, where he knew he should be able to find Ed Rickson.

As a matter of fact, Ed was on the lookout for him, for Lewis had agreed with him to settle his hundred dollar obligation after paying him twenty-five dollars down, and the first of these payments was now due.

"I thought you wouldn't go back on me," grinned young Rickson significantly when Lewis turned up at the appointed rendezvous, a road-house on the outskirts of the town, where Rickson had secured employment congenial to his tastes.

"Why should I?" answered Lewis, as if offended at the very idea of such a thing.

"That's right! Why should you?" said Rickson. "I s'pose you have brought the cash?" he added eagerly.

"Sure thing," and Lewis produced twenty-five dollars in notes, which he handed over.

"You're a little man of your word, Lewis," said Ed, stowing the money away. "Come inside and have a drink."

Lewis was not accustomed to intoxicating liquor, as the Squire very properly frowned upon any such indulgence in his own son, whose sole form of dissipation was confined to a superior brand of imported cigarettes; but the boy was ashamed to refuse Rickson's invitation lest Ed twit him as a milksop.



Secretly he believed drinking was a manly art, for he had seen his father slightly under the influence of stimulants on several occasions, and the recollection of his parent's weakness in this respect stilled his own conscience.

So he stood up to the bar, and Ed poured out a couple of whiskies.

"Here's luck," said Rickson, swallowing his like a veteran.

Lewis' portion nearly strangled him, for it was a fiery compound and none of the best.

"Went the wrong way, did it?" grinned Ed. "Take some water."

Lewis presented a sad picture as he stood gasping over the dose, which had brought tears to his eyes.

Indeed, it is always a sad picture to see a young man—it was far worse in this case, for Lewis Jarvis was only seventeen—taking his first lessons in that curse of civilization, liquor drinking.

That it is the root of all evil is graphically illustrated in that piece of Oriental fiction called the "Arabian Nights," which recites that a genie, or wicked spirit, having obtained control over a certain young man, agreed to spare his life on condition that his dupe should commit one of three mortal sins—either to murder his father or get drunk. The young man chose what he considered the least of the three. He got drunk, with the result that on being taxed with his sin by his father, he, in a burst of fury, killed him; then, realizing his crime, he in despair cursed the day he was born.

Lewis Jarvis soon recovered from the effects of the potation, and after a short conversation on sporting topics he broached the real object of his wit.

"How is that for an idea?" grinned Lewis, proud of the mean scheme he had devised. "I'll have him dead to rights, eh?"

"You've got a great head, Lewis," said Rickson with a sneer. "So you want me to sneak into Northport again and work it for you?"

"Yes."

"How much do I get?"

"Twenty-five dollars."

"Cash down?"

"Yes; but you'll have to give me more time on what I owe you on the old account."

Rickson considered a few minutes and then agreed to the proposal.

"When do you want it done?"

"Any time within a week will do."

"All right. Have another drink," and the hardened young fellow replenished the tumblers.

Lewis looked at his portion and hesitated.

"What's the matter?" laughed Rickson banteringly. "Can't you go two drinks?"

"Sure!" replied Lewis, flushing up as he grasped the glass.

"Maybe you had better dilute it," grinned Ed, tantalizingly.

"Pooh!" cried Lewis, raising it to his chin. "I'm no baby."

All the same, the liquor gave him another coughing fit, and he was glad to take some water afterward.

When he boarded the train for home half an hour later he was rather unsteady on his legs.

## CHAPTER XVI.

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

The railroad station was not far from the Northport cotton mills, and Lewis Jarvis had to pass the factory on his way home.

He had not noticed Jessie Fairweather since the evening Will Somers had interfered between them in her behalf.

And with good reason, for the spirited girl took good care to keep out of the way, having no desire for any further intercourse with him.

Lewis was feeling somewhat exalted from the stimulating effect of bad whisky on his brain.

As he came along the factory girls were leaving the mills, the full force having been put to work that day for the first time since the fire.

Jessie was walking slowly down the street in expectation that Will would soon catch up with her, as usual.

He had not yet appeared when Lewis Jarvis saw her ahead.

The sight of her at this moment aroused all that was ugly in his disposition.

He hastened his steps and soon caught up with her.

"Going to speak with me this time, aren't you?" he demanded in a husky voice, and with a half-intoxicating leer that startled the girl.

Jessie made no answer, but started to cross to the other side

of the road, when he put out his hand and firmly detained her.

"Going to answer me or not?" he said menacingly.

"Let me alone, Will Jarvis!" she cried angrily. "You wouldn't dare touch me if Will Somers was here."

"What do I care for Somers?" he returned with a hiccup. "Mis'able pauper! Common upstart! Thinks he's as good as me. Know who I am, don't you?"

"I believe you have been drinking," cried Jessie in dismay.

"Been drinking? Sure thing. All gen'lemen drink. My father, Squire, most important gen'leman in town—he drinks. So do I."

"If you don't take your hand from my arm, Lewis Jarvis," cried Jessie, desperately, "I'll slap your face."

"Which face? This face?" asked Lewis, with drunken humor. "You will slap nothing, see! I've got you now, and I'm going to kiss you!"

At this threat Jessie struck him full in the face, but he seized her in both his arms and tried to carry out his purpose.

Jessie, unable to help herself further, uttered a shrill scream, which reached Will's ears as he was coming out of the engine-yard gate.

The boy started to her assistance at once.

Coming up at a run, he seized Lewis bodily as the young aristocrat was bending back her head to accomplish his reckless object, and, tearing him away from the girl, he flung him in a heap against the fence.

"Oh, Will!" cried Jessie, impulsively throwing her arms about his neck, and, dropping her face on his shoulder, she burst into hysterical weeping.

"It's Lewis Jarvis, is it?" he cried, in some astonishment, now recognizing the Squire's son, as that reckless youth staggered to his feet with a fierce scowl on his features.

"Yes, and he's been drinking!" shuddered the girl.

"Oh, he has!"

"I'll get square with you for that, Will Somers!" yelled Lewis furiously. "I will, if I have to die for it."

"Come along, Jessie," said Will, ignoring the vengeful youth.

Lewis shook his fist after them as they passed on.

"You pauper, you! I'll fix that dam for you and burst your whole scheme up! Do you understand? You'll strike me, will you, you beggar! I'll fix you! Just see if I don't!" he screamed out.

Will heard the threat, but he and Jessie went on as if Lewis had spoken to the empty air.

Lewis watched them out of sight before he left the spot.

It was getting dark now, and he managed to reach home without attracting any comment.

Fortunately for him, his father was absent in Boston on business, and so he escaped a well-merited reprimand for the condition he was in.

That week Will received from Washington a certificate, confirming to him for the usual number of years the patent rights on his improved damper regulator, and the superintendent made an agreement with his mother, as his guardian, for its use in the factory engine-room on a regular royalty.

Specifications for his new steam economizer and condenser were at the same time drawn up and forwarded to a patent attorney in the Capitol City to be patented, and we may as well state here that in due time he sold the rights to the Northport cotton mills for five thousand dollars.

Superintendent Harper had, at Will's request, visited the swamp-plot and investigated the outlook.

His verdict assured him that he would have a ten-acre field of ice in due course to sell to the Rockland Ice Company, which was in the market for such privileges as soon as they were ripe.

As they left the spot they did not see a crouching form hiding in the underbrush.

It was Ed Rickson, and he had a crowbar with him.

As soon as all was still again he clambered out on the dam, and inserting the end of the bar between the narrow crack in the boards, began to pry them apart.

His object was apparent.

He meant to make a sufficiently large opening in the dam to allow the confined water to escape.

Fortunately, the plans of the wicked do not always prosper.

Before Will reached home he missed his big horn-handled jack-knife, which was a handy companion in the engine-room repair shop.

"By George!" he said. "I remember I laid that down on one of the stringers of the dam while I was talking to Mr. Harper. I must go back and get it."

So he hastily retraced his steps.



As he drew near the dam he heard queer sounds, not unlike the ripping of boards, and he began to wonder.

He rushed forward to investigate.

At that moment the moon, which had been obscured all the evening, suddenly shone out between a rift in the clouds, and Will saw something that staggered him.

It was Ed Rickson hard at work in his efforts to destroy the dam.

"Hi, there! What are you doing?" Will cried in astonished anger.

Rickson turned in a startled way and dropped the crowbar into the water.

"Come out of that!" exclaimed Will.

"Go to thunder!" replied the rascal.

"So it's you, Ed Rickson. You're a nice scoundrel, you are, trying to spoil my property," ejaculated Will, as mad as he could be when he came to realize the despicable attempt to ruin his ice privilege.

"Well, it's me, all right," replied Rickson, in surly tones, for he saw the game was up, especially as the crowbar was gone. "What are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to hand you over to Constable Brady right away."

And he meant it, too.

Now it happened that Will's blood was up, and so reckless of consequences was he that he clambered out on the dam, determined to bring Ed Rickson to justice at last.

Ed saw him coming, and waited with a diabolical grin.

He was satisfied he could easily handle Will Somers, as stout a lad as he looked.

When they grappled in the center of the dam he found out that the job was not as easy as he had supposed.

It was a pretty even thing, however, as to which would come out ahead.

"Wait until I get a good grip on you and I'll toss you into your pond, blast you!" gritted Ed.

As they struggled and struck at one another on top of the dam they were in alternate light and shadow, as the moon shone down upon their writhing forms or hid their faces behind a drifting cloud.

It was a fight to the finish, and no mistake.

Will was a bit overmatched, but not outclassed.

He was strong and tough, and his fists were like small sledge-hammers.

Every time they landed on Rickson he grunted, while Will took his own punishment in silence, never yielding an inch to his antagonist at any stage, though the blood trickled from a nasty cut over his eye.

At length Will's greater power of endurance began to prevail.

Taking advantage of this, the boy ducked down, seized Ed's leg below the knee, and jerking it up, overbalanced his antagonist, who pitched sideways into the water of the pond.

That ended the fight.

Rickson came up from his plunge completely subdued.

It was not improbable that had he been left to himself he might have been drowned, so exhausted was he.

Will, however, grabbed him by the collar of his jacket and slowly dragged him to firm ground. He then took the precaution to bind his hands behind his back.

Will marched his prisoner to the residence of Constable Brady, a quarter of a mile away, who took him to the town jail.

Next day Will Somers went before Justice Benson and swore out a complaint of malicious mischief against Ed Rickson.

Ed lost no time in sending for Lewis Jarvis.

"Get me out of this, do you understand?" he said to Lewis when that lad appeared, "or I'll blow the whole business from beginning to end."

Lewis, terrified at the thought of public exposure, promised to enlist his father in Rickson's behalf.

In order to secure the Squire's co-operation, it is probable that Lewis made a clean breast of the matter to his father.

At any rate, Squire Jarvis appeared for Ed when he was brought before Justice Benson; the prisoner was also charged with burglarizing the lawyer's office.

The nabob, of course, refused to press this charge, and as there was not sufficient evidence against the rascal it was allowed to drop.

Will, with Sam Travis' assistance, recovered the short crowbar with which Rickson had intended to break down the dam, and produced it against the prisoner.

Rickson flatly denied that he had used it against Will's property with malicious intent, but both Will and Sam, as well as Constable Brady, who had visited the dam, testified to the abrasures in the boards, which admitted of but one con-

struction, so Ed was adjudged guilty by the justice and sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment.

A day or so later Squire Jarvis called on Mrs. Somers and notified her that the promissory note having been recovered, she would be held for its payment.

When Will came home from the factory his mother told him of the Squire's visit.

"We'll contest it, mother, on the ground of fraud. Call on Sam Travis' father. He's a good lawyer, and he will advise you in the matter."

After supper Jessie Fairweather came in, as she often did, to show Mrs. Somers a new dress pattern she had received from Boston.

"I've got something to tell you, Will," she said, while Mrs. Somers was out of the room for a short interval, "but you must promise not to say a word about it to any one."

"All right," said Will, "I promise."

"Tessie Rickson came to me to-day and begged that I would become friendly with her again, for she said as long as she and I were not on speaking terms none of the other girls would notice her. She admitted that it was she who put her pocket-book in the pocket of my dress on the day of the fire, in the hope of disgracing me. She said Lewis Jarvis had put her up to it, and had told her I had said many unkind things about her, which, of course, was not so; and she now knows that Lewis Jarvis simply made a dupe of her in order to get square with me. But the worst thing of all, Will, she confessed to me that she was the cause of the fire at the mill, and told me why she set a match to the dresses of certain girls without thinking any further damage would result. She's a thoughtless girl, with very poor principles, and I feel sorry for her."

"She'd get into a pack of trouble if it became known that she started the fire at the factory," said Will, not a little astonished at the revelation.

"Well, I must be going," Jessie said, as Mrs. Somers returned to the room. "Why, what's the matter with the clock? It must be half-past eight now, yet the hands point to a quarter past seven, just as they did when I entered the room."

"Evidently it has stopped," said Will, walking up to the mantelpiece.

While fumbling with it the bottom suddenly came away in his hand, and a small piece of folded paper dropped out.

Jessie picked it up and handed it to Mrs. Somers, who casually opened it.

"Why, Will," she said in a tone of mingled surprise and joy, "here is the missing receipt at last."

"You don't mean it, mother!" exclaimed the boy in amazement.

His mother passed it to him.

"Received of Nathaniel Somers the sum of three hundred and six dollars, in full satisfaction of his note of hand bearing date of——" read Will. "And it is signed by Job Rickson. That settles it, mother. You don't want a lawyer now."

"Isn't that splendid!" exclaimed Jessie, clapping her hands with pleasure. "How fortunate that the dear old clock stopped."

Will allowed the case to be brought into court, and then, when Squire Jarvis was gloating over the bill of costs he thought Widow Somers would have to pay, she produced the receipt, and covered both the nabob and Job Rickson with confusion.

The same day, too, Will was waited on by three members of the town council, and presented with the gold medal, appropriately inscribed, which had been awarded to him in recognition of his heroism at the factory fire.

Will Somers' ten-acre pond produced an ice privilege in January which netted him something like three thousand dollars.

Not only that, but the swamp-plot thereafter annually netted him a similar sum, so that his game of chance, after all, resulted in a permanent income.

"Just enough for you and I to buy a nice little house and start housekeeping within a year or two," he said to Jessie when he showed her his first check from the Rockland Ice Company.

And Jessie blushed radiantly and clapped her pretty fingers over his mouth.

Next week's issue will contain "THE YOUNG EDITOR; OR, RUNNING A COUNTRY NEWSPAPER."

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## CURRENT NEWS

Edward Wickham, living north of Ottawa, Ont., has captured a queer, bat-like creature, of vampire type. It bit Mr. Wickham's dog, causing its death in a few moments. It is about four inches long, covered with thick, gray fur, mottled with yellow, brown and white. The membranous wings measure twelve inches from tip to tip. It has five toes, a small mouth and teeth.

What is probably the smallest working electric motor in the world was exhibited recently at the University of North Dakota by I. T. Nedland, a jeweller of Hillsboro, N. Dak., who made it. It weighs 34 grains and its dimensions are: Length, 0.563 inches; height, 0.291 inch; width, 0.334 inch; diameter of armature, 0.071 inch; diameter of commutator 0.0106 inch. the armature weight 4 grains. A 2.5-volt battery supplies the energy.

Harry Williams of Elkhart, Colo., has been brought to Wichita, Kan., for treatment for a tarantula bite that he received in southern New Mexico several days ago, and which has caused him to lose thirty pounds in flesh. He forgot to wind his lariat round his pallet after a cattle round-up and the insect stung him on the hand. He drove twenty-three miles in a motor car and took the train for Wichita, where he has an aunt who is a physician. His arm is greatly swollen, but he will recover.

Six city lots in Akron, Ohio, was the price placed on his daughter by John Basco, who admitted to Juvenile Court authorities he had arranged to sell his daughter, Mary, sixteen, to a man of sixty. The man was to marry her. "I am an old man and cannot support myself," he told Judge Lytle. "There is a man of my own age who wishes to marry my daughter. He has promised me six city lots for her. On that I could live comfortably the rest of my life." The girl will not be returned to her father.

When Mary Carnova, the thirteen-year-old daughter of Antonio Carnova of 12 Forest Street, Orange, N. J., awoke the other morning she found that her long black hair, which was of exceptional beauty and the pride of the family, had been cut off. She did not know how or when she had been despoiled. The police arrested Polo Cripsy, aged fifty-one, a boarder at the Carnova home, but Carnova would not believe Cripsy was guilty, and the charge against him was dismissed. Chief of Police Drabell believes that the hair was cut off for revenge by some enemy of the girl's father.

Immigration from Europe to western Canada has practically stopped, and there has been a great decrease from the United States. Some interesting conclusions may be drawn from the immigration figures. In the last week of September 1914 persons entered western Canada from the United States, bringing in cash \$45,000 and effects to the value of \$1,315. In 1913, same week, 1,563

persons entered from the States, bringing \$201,247 in money and \$60,304 worth of effects. From these figures it will be seen that immigration from the States has fallen off 80 per cent.

Norman Anderson, a seventeen-year-old English midget, standing 3 feet high and weighing 60 pounds, who arrived recently on the liner St. Louis, tells an interesting story of how he escaped from the war zone in a bale of hay. Anderson, who is an acrobat, was traveling with a circus through England. He says English army authorities asked him to go into the English army as a spy. He also declared England has hired a family of German midgets to go into the German forces dressed as children to sell newspapers. Norman refused and escaped to this country smuggled in the bottom of a bale of hay.

Honors for hooking the biggest fish that ever got away go to Marlin Ulrich, a salesman of Oakland, who, with a party of friends, was out for a big fish in Ulrich's launch Germany off Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, says the San Francisco Chronicle. Suddenly his line gave a violent tug. He grasped it with all his might. So strong was the pull that the launch began to plunge wildly through the waves. After a few minutes of excited uncertainty something strange and shapeless rose from a swirl of foam ahead. It was submarine K-27 taking a practice spin. Ulrich's hook had fouled a rivet on the exterior of the submarine. He cut the line.

With a classic selection played on a mouth organ, William H. Harding of Spring Grove, Pa., took the fight out of a six-foot blacksnake that showed every disposition to attack him. Harding was strolling through a grove near Nashville, when he saw the snake coiled on a limb apparently preparing to flop down upon him. Recalling stories of snakes charmed by music, Harding leaped aside and, drawing a mouth organ from his pocket, began to play a plaintive air. The effect was like magic. The reptile swayed with the music until it lost its grip and fell to the ground, where it lay as though lifeless. When Harding stopped playing the snake glided off into the bush.

In an attempt to reproduce a fight at sea between a submarine boat and armed cruisers such as they had read about in connection with the European war, Mishawaka youths came near causing the death of one of their companions, Donald Geould. The boy, in a barrel, which was to represent the submarine, was sent to the bottom of the St. Joseph River. His life was saved by men on the bank. Geould entered an old cider barrel with a hole bored in the top and his companions began to heave heavy boulders at the craft. The rocks turned the barrel over and a rush of water through the hole submerged Geould. The boys are all about fifteen years old.



# THE GALLANT TROOPER

— OR —

## FIGHTING FOR UNCLE SAM

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER I.

#### COMMENCEMENT WEEK AT LAKE FOREST MILITARY ACADEMY.

The boys at Lake Forest Military Academy had just finished their afternoon drill, and their captain, handsome Vivian Merle, stood talking to the principal, Captain Henry Noble, a tall, distinguished-looking man of about fifty years of age. He had made an honorable record for himself during the late war, and was now at the head of the most famous military school in the West.

It was a pretty scene, that the last rays of the setting sun shone over. The throng of young men standing about in groups eagerly conversing, their blue uniforms and glittering brass buttons making a fine showing, the huge old oaks of the grove where they were forming a leafy, green canopy over their heads, while just below the steep ravine that skirted the edge of the grounds lay the shimmering waters of Lake Michigan. A quarter of a mile away, on the summit of a gentle sloping hill, appeared the white wings and gables of Lakeside Seminary, a select school for young ladies. Vivian Merle's blue eyes glowed with pleasure at the principal's words and his bosom heaved with pride.

"I must say that I never yet saw a regiment of soldiers that were better drilled, or who appeared to obey the slightest motion of their commanding officer, any quicker than the boys obey you, Vivian," Captain Noble said. "You will make a great soldier some day, my boy," laying one hand on the young man's shoulder.

"That has always been the dream of my life, sir," Vivian answered, eagerly. "And all I ask is a chance to prove what I am made of. Ever since I was a little boy, I have longed to be in a real battle. But," with a sigh, "I am afraid it's a good ways off."

"Don't be too sure of that, Vivian," Captain Noble replied, somewhat gravely. "You may possibly have a chance to get rather more of fighting than you really want. You know that nearly all the troops are ordered to the front, and even then there's not enough to conquer those red demons. If the worst comes, there will have to be a good many volunteers sent out."

Vivian said nothing, but secretly he wished that it would come to that, for then the desire of his life would be attained. Alas! how little he dreamed how soon he would have his wish. Our readers will understand that it was at

the beginning of the general uprising among the Indians in 1876, that tragic time when the gallant Custer lost his life. For weeks the situation had been growing more serious, but to the boys at the Academy it seemed to be another world almost.

"There is one thing which troubles me, Vivian," Captain Noble remarked, thoughtfully, "and that is Clarence Kendal's conduct at every drill. I do not know what to make of him. Why, he actually trembles at the report of the muskets, and I have seen him turn pale at sight of a saber. He is a good-hearted boy, too, generous, agreeable, entertaining, well liked by all his comrades. It was a mistake his parents sending him here. I am really sorry for him, he looks so wretched at every battle call."

"He will most likely get over that in time, sir," Vivian replied respectfully. "I believe he is a trifle nervous, that is all, and then you know he is an only child. His parents have always petted him, but I don't think Clarence is a coward at heart."

"A few weeks of hard knocking about would make a man of him," Captain Noble said with a smile. "I have seen lots of young fellows just like him, but a taste of army life soon cured them, and—there goes the supper bell. I did not think it was so late."

Leaving the gymnasium, which was in the grove, the boys formed in line, marching in a body to the academy. In that same way they entered the long dining-room, where Captain Noble already awaited them, standing at the head of the first table.

They were as fine a looking lot of young men as one would wish to see. Strong, sturdy, their limbs and shoulders well developed from constant training, their faces flushed with exercise.

Vivian Merle sat next to Captain Noble, and beside him was Clarence Kendal, a rather delicate looking youth with dark eyes and hair. Opposite the two was a very striking looking couple, a direct contrast to each other, and yet they were intimate friends—Charlie Root, a decided blond young man with cold, light-gray eyes, and Manuel de Garcia, a swarthy, heavy-eyed Cuban, handsome enough in a sinister sort of way. Aside from being friends, they were room-mates, and neither one liked Vivian Merle because he was so much more popular than they were. At the same time they dared not openly show their dislike for him. The Cuban had been at the academy for years. He was sent there by his guardian, and in the event of his coming of age, which would be soon, he would inherit a



fortune. Charlie Root was not so fortunate. He was dependent upon an uncle in Chicago, who paid his expenses and looked after him until he should graduate.

Fate had been more than kind to Vivian Merle, inasmuch as she had blessed him with good looks, a sunny, genial disposition that made for him friends wherever he went. He was the only child of a millionaire banker who thought the universe especially created for his handsome son.

Every boy at the academy could testify as to his generosity, and many a poor boy, who had a hard time to fight his way through, blessed Vivian Merle for the helping hand extended to him in the hour of need; and while he was faithful, conscientious, and an earnest working student, no one in the school was ready for a lark any quicker than he was.

Supper over, the boys marched from the dining-room and thence to their own rooms. The morrow would be the beginning of the commencement week—the most pleasant time of the whole year—and there was much to be done to get everything in readiness for it.

Captain Noble sent for Vivian to come to his private office for a few moments, as he wanted to see him about something concerning the exercises of the next morning, and while he was absent, Charlie Root, chancing to pass his room, saw the door open. Hesitating a moment only, he softly entered.

The room was the same as those occupied by the other boys, but the luxurious hangings, the extra appointments made it seem entirely different.

"My fine young swell is not satisfied to have his room like the rest of the boys," he muttered enviously, "and neither will he share his apartment with any one else. I would give ten years of my life to see him taken down a peg or two. Ah, what is this?"

He was fingering the silver-backed hair brushes, the cut-glass scent bottles with nervous, restless fingers, his pale eyes glittering greedily. Why should Vivian Merle have so much while he had nothing, he asked himself.

The object which called forth that last remark was a crystal decanter encased in a network of solid silver. He removed the stopper and sniffed the contents.

"Alas! Mr. Merle's cocktails," he said with a grin, "and very good ones, I must confess," tasting them. "I wonder what Captain Noble would say if he knew of this? I believe I will quietly inform him that his favorite is indulging a bit too heavily. Then, Mr. Vivian Merle, I fancy you will get called down before the whole school."

Hearing the sound of approaching footsteps he dodged out of the room and down the long hall. He was not a moment too soon, for Vivian entered and seating himself before the table was soon busy studying.

Every boy was astir early the following morning, all excited and eager to excel, for they knew the next few days would be the time for them to distinguish themselves. There were the drills, the performances in the gymnasium during the day, the dances in the evening when the girls from Lakeside Seminary were all present, the moonlight strolls, the music, the singing. And then there were the forbidden meetings after the bell had rung for "lights out," the delicious danger of being caught, and take it

all in all, it was a week never to be forgotten by those merry, lighthearted young men, most of whom had never known a care during their lives, and the girls, who were determined to have a few nights' enjoyment away from the watchful eyes of the two spinsters at the Seminary.

## CHAPTER II.

### AT LAKESIDE SEMINARY.

Life at Lakeside Seminary was not nearly so pleasant for the young ladies as it was for the students at the academy. Captain Noble was a jolly, good-natured man, always ready to conceal the faults of the boys, whereas the two maiden ladies who presided over the former were ever on the alert to discover wickedness in some of their pupils, especially if that unlucky damsel chanced to be one who was not blessed with any too much of this world's dross. Money was a balm for all wounds in the virgin eyes of those fair ones, and every girl there knew it.

Diana Le Grand was the one who chanced to be in disfavor on the fair June morning following the evening of the hop at the academy, and Miss Rebecca Skelton's green, gray eyes fairly snapped fire as she glared at the young lady who serenely returned her strong stare. Miss Rebecca was the elder of the sisters, a vinegar-faced female, who had started in life with the firm resolution of going to her grave unmarried. And it must be confessed that she never had any trouble in keeping the opposite sex at arm's length, for she was about as disagreeable looking a woman as one would encounter in a day's travel.

Miss Rose, two years younger, was a very coy, kittenish young person, always looking for the handsome stranger who was to come from a distance, and bear her away to his ancestral halls where she would reign a queen all the rest of her life. She might be found almost any moonlight evening strolling about the seminary grounds, her head fancifully draped in white lace, peering into every spring and brook expecting to behold in their depths the long-looked-for face. But alas! she waited in vain, for no one who knew the lady would be caught within a mile of the place.

The pretty culprit who was in such deep disgrace faced Miss Rebecca, defiantly.

"Now, Miss Le Grand, will you be so very kind as to inform me why you left the hall last evening after you stopped dancing and with whom you were at the time?" she asked, in her sharp, rasping voice, her thin chin quivering with rage. "Are you aware that such a proceeding was disgraceful beyond measure? Is it your intention to ruin the school?"

The girl thus addressed smiled, and thinking she was the object of her amusement, the irate spinster demanded:

"What are you laughing at, Miss Le Grand?"

"Nothing," Diana answered very innocently, looking straight at her. "I was merely thinking. I believe you asked me why I left the hall last night after we had stopped dancing, and who I was with? I simply strolled out into the grounds of the Academy to get a breath of fresh air, for it was very close in the room, and my companion was Mr. Vivian Merle. Anything more that you would like to know, Miss Skelton?"

(To be continued.)



## FACTS WORTH READING

### A HEARSE DRIVER'S RECORD.

Charles Turner has attended approximately 9,000 funerals within twenty-four years, yet he retains a cheerful disposition. Turner, who is a hearse driver in Detroit, Mich., says he believes he has established a world's record in the matter of frequent attendance at burial ceremonies. "I regret that I have not kept any record of the funerals I have attended," Turner said. "However, I am absolutely safe in estimating that I have attended 375 funerals a year for the last twenty-four years. That's just a little better than one a day."

Turner has been in every cemetery within a radius of twenty miles of Detroit. He is only forty-two years old.

### GERMAN SCHOOLBOYS ENROLLED FOR ARMY.

Several States of the German Empire are taking vigorous steps to organize the boys who have not yet reached the age of enlistment, which is nineteen, for military service. The Prussian Minister of Education has issued a decree authorizing the headmasters of elementary and secondary State schools to take necessary measures in conjunction with military authorities to raise a reserve army consisting of boys between the ages of sixteen and nineteen.

Boys between sixteen and nineteen will be available for active service in the field when they have been trained. Boys between the ages of fourteen and sixteen are to receive special military drill to enable them to become active soldiers the moment they attain the age of sixteen.

In Berlin itself several regiments of lads between sixteen and twenty already have been formed and similar reports come from many provincial towns.

### COLUMBIA'S FIRE LOSS.

The fire at Columbia University early the other morning, which started in the gymnasium, did not cause a loss of more than \$270,000, possibly only \$250,000, all of which is believed to be covered by insurance.

Much of the gymnasium can be restored. This building was erected in 1901 as a general home for many of the extra activities of the campus. Owing to a lack of funds, however, the building was not completed, but the gymnasium, swimming pool and power house were installed.

The gymnasium and pool were among the best equipped in the country. The power house, which supplies light, heat and power to the entire university, represented an expenditure of nearly \$1,000,000. The top floor was a temporary addition.

Investigation leads to the belief that the fire started on the top floor. It was there that the dining rooms and kitchen of the university commons were located, together with the offices of The Daily Spectator, The Jester, the Quadrangle, College Entrance Board, Prison Labor Bureau of the State, the band room and the private offices of several members of the faculty. These rooms and the things in them were destroyed, but the gymnasium, swimming pool and power house were not harmed.

### GERMANS SANK OWN BOAT AT PAPEETE.

Two lives were lost, \$2,000,000 damage was done, two vessels were sunk and two blocks of business houses and residences were destroyed by the German cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau in their bombardment recently of the French colony of Papeete, Tahiti.

Refugees from the island told the story on their arrival at San Francisco aboard the Union Steamship Company's liner Moana.

No landing was made and no supplies or stores were captured. The French set fire to a 40,000-ton coal pile to prevent the Germans replenishing their bunkers. A passenger on the Moana said:

"The little French gunboat Kelee sank, riddled with holes. Her prize, the German merchantman Walkyrie, flew no flag, and the Germans, ignorant of her nationality and that her crew were prisoners on the island, sank her too.

"The bombardment lasted about two hours. Those houses surrounding the American Consulate over which the Stars and Stripes were flying conspicuously were not damaged, but the water front and mercantile district were utterly wrecked. The German warships steamed away undamaged."

### LAND RETURNED TO GOVERNMENT.

For the first time in history a farm has been deeded back to the Government after it became known the land had been improperly filed on. As a result the funds in the United States treasury have been increased \$5,000, for Mrs. Mary Mitchell, who lives just across the line from Denver, Col., in Nebraska, turned over property valued at that amount after she became converted. Before Mrs. Mitchell "got religion," as she expressed it, she got from the Government 160 acres of good Nebraska farm land by a method which has since been found irregular. The day after her conversion she wrote a letter denouncing herself. She is now the wife of a prominent Nebraska resident, a former office holder, and herself prominent in educational circles in more than one State of the West. She writes that she now has "peace of mind" since she gave back that \$5,000 farm. The letter came to the office of M. D. McEniry, chief of the field division of the general land office. She frankly said she had proved up on 160 acres of land a year ago. She confessed she had made statements not justified as to matters necessary to make final proof on the claim. Special Agent J. L. Stack was assigned to investigate. He went to the county seat and found the farm standing in the name of Mrs. Mitchell. Then he went to the farm and found it was rich with golden corn and wheat. Acting upon the advice of his superior officer in Denver, Stack told the woman that inasmuch as she had admitted irregularities in obtaining the farm, there was only one course to pursue, and that was to deed it back to the Government. She signed the necessary papers.



# The Fight for the Pirate's Isle

— OR —

## CAPTAIN DIABLO'S LAST CRUISE

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XII (continued)

"Advance then!" said the pirate chief.

The three men came on.

"What means this?" he yelled.

"Oh, captain, the men have landed!"

"What men? Speak, wretch!"

"From the Albatross."

"What?"

"It is so, captain, there's not a moment to be lost. We endeavored to resist their landing, but two boatsful were coming ashore, so we ran to give the alarm."

"Thousand furies!" shrieked Captain Diablo. "These scoundrels on my island! By heaven! I'll teach them a lesson they won't forget! Not one shall leave the place alive! I swear it!"

He was mad with passion, but felt no sense of fear.

He knew too well the wonderful nature of his stronghold, and was really rather pleased that his mortal foes had placed themselves in his power.

"Stay here on guard. See that no one forces the door. I'll fetch help. Ruiz, look well to it. Your heads shall answer if one man gets inside."

With a glance which conveyed even more than the words, he left his followers at their perilous post.

As Captain Diablo hurried off, Ruiz and the three pirates, who realized that their lives depended on the issue, ran down the passage to the entrance.

Outside, through the thick walls of rock, they could faintly hear the noise made by the enemy.

Finding the fastening of the door, Ruiz pushed the barrel of his pistol into it, so that he could defy the efforts of the invaders.

The men outside for some time made no movement.

They were evidently in doubt as to whether, now the entrance was discovered, it was not better to beat a retreat.

After a time, however, they seemed to have made up their minds, for the pirates could hear them rapping on the secret door, evidently with an intention of finding the spring which opened it.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Ruiz. "Waste your time, my good fellows. If you do find it, you won't be any better off. They will know the fastenings secured inside."

Meanwhile Captain Diablo was hurriedly returning with a large body of men.

The invaders were plainly heard as they rapidly advanced.

Then the glimmer of light cast by their lanterns was easily distinguishable.

But just at this moment the huge rock, which served as a door to the secret passage, seemed to quiver.

There was only a slight movement, but the pirates saw it plainly.

Ruiz, secure in his own mind, smiled serenely.

All at once the heavy rock, set in motion by some mysterious agency of which no one had the least knowledge, commenced to move.

The mighty force that controlled it snapped the heavy steel barrel of the pirate's pistol in two as if it were a piece of wood.

With a crash, back swung the great door, and a body of armed men sprang into the entrance.

But ere they had advanced a yard, Captain Diablo, at the head of his men, barred their passage.

So sudden was the onset that the invaders were driven back to the beach.

"Seize the boats!" yelled the Sea Demon, "let not one of them escape!"

A body of pirates hurried to execute the order.

But the leader of the attacking force had no intention of being caught in this manner.

His men spread out and barred the way.

Then the fight became hot and exciting.

As Captain Diablo came into the light of day, his gaze fell on a well-known figure.

"Dick Decker!" he gasped. "The dead come to life."

"Yes, monster, come back to send you to your doom."

With eyes that blazed with fire, Dick Decker rushed at the pirate chief.

Their blades crossed in fierce conflict.

Each knew the desperate nature of the fight.

For Captain Diablo's men greatly outnumbered the crew of the Albatross, and it was only by the most heroic exertions that the latter could hope to reach their boats.

Harry Hamilton was not with the party.

He had stayed behind in command of the schooner.

Captain Diablo, as he faced his young foe, smiled grimly.

"I thank you, Captain Decker, for paying me this visit. It saves me the trouble of searching the seas for you."

"When it's over you'll be sorry I've come," was the answer.

"That remains to be seen, my young friend."

Furiously the two men fought.



In their eagerness neither noticed what was happening to the rest of the combatants.

A wide space separated them from their followers.

Under Ben Barnacle and Bill Bluff the crew of the Albatross were fighting their way back to the boats.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding all his efforts, Captain Diablo found it by no means an easy task to get rid of his opponent.

In truth, he had met more than his match.

For although he might be a better swordsman, the other's youth and activity more than counterbalanced this advantage.

Step by step the Sea Demon was forced back into the secret passage.

Blood was falling from his shoulders and body where he had been wounded by his opponent's blade.

This infuriated him, and he renewed the attack savagely.

But he could not break down his young antagonist's guard.

Then from the beach came a wild shout, and the banging of guns and pistols.

Looking down rapidly, Captain Diablo saw that the crew of the Albatross had reached their boats and were pushing off from the shore.

Wild though he was at their escape, yet the position of Dick Decker modified his rage.

"Ha!" he roared, savagely, "at last your time has come. Yield, I say, yield! You are alone on the island!"

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A FALL INTO THE TERRIBLE CHASM.

Dick Decker's position was critical.

Here he was in the secret passage standing opposite Captain Diablo.

Outside a crowd of pirates were rushing up the beach toward the cavern, shouting wild shouts.

Every instant they came nearer.

To turn and run for the sea was not practicable.

For even if he passed the pirates his recollection of the locality told him that escape would be impossible.

For he remembered the high, perpendicular cliffs that shut in the beach.

All these thoughts passed through his mind in a moment.

What was to be done?

He felt mad with himself for his folly.

Nevertheless he did not intend to die like a rat in a hole.

Captain Diablo had ceased his attack.

He calmly waited the coming of his men to secure his valuable prey.

Then he stood opposite Dick Decker, looking at him with a triumphant smile on his face.

"At last you are mine," said the Sea Demon.

The words seemed to rouse the boy commander to action.

With a bound like a tiger, waving his cutlass to clear the way, Dick Decker sprang past Captain Diablo.

The latter was so surprised that he made no effort to stop him.

Right into the jaws of death the young sailor appeared to be rushing.

For he was madly dashing towards the steps that led to the pirate stronghold.

But he felt it was his only chance.

The Sea Demon drew a pistol from his belt and fired.

Bang!

The shot re-echoed through the rocky way, but the bullet passed harmlessly by Dick Decker.

He heard it flatten itself against a rock.

"After him, men, after him!" yelled Captain Diablo.

Like a pack of bloodhounds, with the Sea Demon at their head, the horde of ruffians dashed after the fugitive.

Up the steps toiled Dick Decker, they after him.

Now and again one of the pursuers would fire a pistol, but without doing any damage.

The shot served to show how near they were.

Once at the top of the steps, Dick Decker ran rapidly along the narrow pathway.

Then commenced a descent down the slippery way that led to the great hall of the stronghold.

The pursuers gained rapidly.

Dick Decker, turning around, could see their hideous faces by the light of the lanterns they carried.

"Heaven help me if I fall into their hands," he muttered.

At the bottom of the steps, with the pirates close on his heels, the fugitive redoubled his exertions.

He was hoping all the time to discover some hole or corner where he might hide and elude the ruffians.

A few yards only separated the parties.

Captain Diablo was taking things easy now, for he saw there was no escape.

"Dick Decker," he cried, sarcastically, "wait for us and we'll lend you a lantern. You'll be sure to stumble in this dark passage."

The words were no sooner out of the Sea Demon's mouth when there was a loud cry and the noise of something falling.

The pirates stopped aghast.

For down into the apparently bottomless pit, at whose base the water whirled and boiled, Dick Decker had plunged headlong.

He had forgotten its existence.

"Blame him!" yelled the Demon.

"But he's dead, captain," said a pirate.

"Dead, yes, but I wanted to see him die. He spoiled all my plans. I'd arranged a nice little bit of fun, and now we'll lose it."

The men gathered round the deep hole.

They could hear the waters dashing madly against the sides of the pit, but could see nothing of Dick Decker.

Several men first into the cavern.

Not that they considered it necessary, for they reckoned Dick Decker was a corpse.

(To be continued.)



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The Financial Committee of the Board of Aldermen, Chairman Henry H. Curran, announced that in the future New York City departments must be content with plain printing as far as official writing paper is concerned. The committee will not hereafter authorize expenditures for embossed, engraved or other "classy" kinds of note paper, and the expectation is that the city's printing bill will be cut about \$25,000 a year in consequence.

Albert McQuiglin, thirty-two years old, of Terre Haute, Ind., is again under arrest on the charge of forging checks. He has no hands and does the writing with his teeth. It is his mother's name he is accused of forging. He writes her name so well that only experts can detect the signature is not genuine. When arrested some time ago, his mother made good the amount the son obtained, and he was not prosecuted. He has been bound over to the circuit court on the latest charge.

Lester Snow King, aged six, of Cambridge, Mass., is the newest of the university city's prodigies. He has just passed through the primary school, receiving three promotions in six months, and is now the youngest grammar school pupil in Massachusetts. Lester can add half a dozen columns of figures in his mind and give the correct result in a few minutes, and does mathematical stunts for admiration of his friends. He is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Mary L. King of No. 151 Massachusetts street.

Because of conspicuous bravery shown in the Russian campaign in East Prussia a Jewish non-commissioned officer named Miller has been recommended by Gen. Rennenkampff, for decoration with almost the highest class of the Order of St. George. Miller enrolled as a volunteer at the outbreak of the war and later was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer in a regiment of Cossacks. Among his exploits were the capture of a German armored automobile, the seizure of a supply train, and the taking of a quantity of arms and ammunition. Also, while the Russians were nearing Suwalki, Miller, disguised as a peasant, entered the German lines and obtained full details regarding their forces.

George R. Tuttle paid \$1,750 recently for a thirty-cent American postage stamp of the "error issue" of 1869, at the first public sale of the season by John A. Kiemann, New York City. The stamp is one of a plate printed with inverted flags, and collectors know of only three examples of it that have been saved. The price made a new high record. Mr. Tuttle also paid \$627 for a thirty-cent American stamp of the issue of 1851, for which a record of \$715 had been made at a previous sale. Both purchases were made on commission for an unnamed collector. The sale is of uncommon interest because importation of rare stamps has been cut off from Germany, which has been the main source of supply for collectors.



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## BRIEF BUT POINTED ITEMS

Thirteen university girls living at Madison, Wis., have pledged themselves to speak German, play German and eat German food during their college year, merely to cultivate the German atmosphere and to learn the language to better advantage. The members from the northwest are Elsie Springer, Mineral Point, Wis.; Agnes Robinson, Council Bluffs, Ia.; Charlotte Harp, La Crosse, and Hulda Roade, Esterville, Ia. Miss Anna Essinger of the German department of the university is the "house mother" at the girls' club apartments.

David Wilson woke up suddenly in the railroad yards early the other morning and thought he was fighting Austrians. He did not know who he was, but when switchmen shook him it was learned he was a soldier. He had on nothing but a union suit of underwear. At a local hospital it was found he was a member of the Thirteenth United States Infantry. In a dream he had jumped over the breastworks and had landed on the ground, out of a window of a forty-mile-an-hour special train on the way to the Philippines.

Frank Herse lost a leg at South Bend, Neb., a few days ago when he got his foot caught in the frog of a railroad track. A passenger train was approaching and before he could release the foot the train was upon him so he simply leaned back and allowed the engine and several cars to pass over and crush the cork leg. Herse unfastened the leg after the train had gone and hopped to a nearby house. Herse lost his original leg in a similar accident when he was a brakeman ten years ago.

A record shipment by parcel post was made from the Marysville, Cal., postoffice by the J. R. Garrett Company to a firm at Sawyer's Bar in Siskiyou County. In weight the shipment aggregated 11,000 pounds—five tons and a half—and to comply with the Government regulations was done up in 255 pieces. Most every commodity carried by a provision house was represented. The postage on the shipment alone amounted to \$129.30, represented in stamps attached to tags on the packages, with an additional \$6.40 for insurance, making a total cost of \$135.70.

The little mining town of Telluride, Col., was virtually wiped off the map when a cloudburst fell in Cornet Creek, four miles above the main part of the city. Two women were drowned and fifteen children were rescued after a wall of water from eight to twenty feet high had hit the city. A modern Paul Revere warned the citizens of their impending danger from the flood racing down upon them. Gregory Sanchez, a miner, was not working, and while sitting upon his porch he heard the roar of the torrent. He ran half clad into the town, warning every one as he passed. Soon after he had given the warning hundreds of families were fleeing to the hillsides.

## JOKES AND JESTS.

Train Robber—Come! shell out! Rural Minister (sadly)—"If I had such energetic fellows as you to pass the plate now and then, I might have something to give you."

House Owner—How does your furnace work this weather? Tenant—The exercise of raking it keeps me warm enough, but the other members of the family complain.

A colored woman was arguing and arguing with her husband, and when she had finished he said, "Dinah, yo' talk don' affect me no mo' 'n a flea bite." "Well," she answered, "I'se gawna keep yo' scratchin'."

"What was the nature of the cruelty you suffered in the English jail?" was asked of the suffragette. "I was forced to eat." "But was that particularly cruel?" "It might not be for a man, but it's cruel to make a woman do anything she doesn't want to."

"Daddy, what makes your nose so dreadfully red?" asked a little boy of his father one day at dinner. "The east wind, of course!" the father answered gruffly. "Pass that decanter, and don't talk so much." "Yes, Tommy," said the boy's mother sweetly, "pass your father the east wind, and be careful not to spill any on the table cloth!"

One predicts a future for the schoolboy who wrote the following terse narrative about Elijah: "There was a man named Elijah. He had some bears and he lived in a cave. Some boys tormented him. He said: 'If you keep on throwing stones at me, I'll turn the bears on you and they'll eat you up.' And they did and he did and the bears did."

Here is another Mark Twain story which may be new to many. He had finished his speech at a dinner party, and on his seating himself a lawyer rose, shoved his hands deep into his trousers pockets, as was his habit, and laughingly inquired of those present, "Doesn't it strike this company as a little unusual that a professional humorist should be funny?" When the laughter that greeted this sally had subsided Mark Twain drawled out, "Doesn't it strike this company as a little unusual that a lawyer should have his hands in his own pockets?"



# IN A DEN OF RATTLESNAKES.

By D. W. Stevens

"Hello, boys, there goes Uncle Ike into the mountains rattlesnake hunting," yelled Roland Aubrey, one morning, to a group of youngsters with whom he was playing.

They stopped their play and called out:

"Say, Uncle Ike, can't we go along?"

"It's a mighty good distance, boys; but ef yer think y' kin stand it, yer kin come along," cried Uncle Ike.

Isaac Daggert, or "Uncle Ike," as he was familiarly called, had been, in his day, a famous backwoodsman and hunter, but as civilization encroached on his wild domain, and increasing years impaired his strength, he had come down from the mountains to live in the village of Avondale. But he never lost his love for his old pastimes, and he would tramp the woods for days at a time in search of game.

In later years he was called "the rattlesnake hunter," on account of the number he caught alive and shipped to the purchasers in the cities.

The boys jumped and danced, and turned somersaults with glee at Uncle Ike's consent, for they knew that they were in for a day's sport.

They marched for miles along the base of the Pocono, that stands guard over the eastern side of the beautiful Wyoming Valley, so famed in history and song, and in later times for its black diamonds. The old man and boys then began to ascend the mountain, along the edge of the defile down which pours Roaring Brook. The scenery was picturesque and wild.

"Boys, we're gittin' on my old huntin' grounds, whar I've killed many a bar and deer. Yer see over thar on t'other side uv the stream is where I fit a panther. I was watchin' deer cum down to drink, and the critter jumped on me from a tree."

"It ain't many years since there used to be Indians in these woods," broke in Roland Aubrey.

"Bless yer soul, child, Uncle Ike has nigh lost his scalp many a time, but I was young then. Along this yer route, which was then a wilderness, an' the trees were blazed so that they could follow the way, the settlers what were not killed by the red devils in the massacre—the women and children—fled this way back to York State and Connecticut. It's called to this day 'The Shadow of Death.'"

The old man was in the most talkative mood, and the revival of old scenes and memories made his tongue more glib.

"There hain't any Indians, bears and panthers here now, be there, Uncle Ike?" chimed in the tidbit of humanity, Dave Fach, with a timed, yet assuring, air and tone of voice.

"Waal, Dave, I've seen bar here only last week—a mother an' her two cubs. They live in one of them caves over thar," pointing to the other side.

"I see something black in the water away up the ravine. It must be a black stump," said Roland Aubrey.

Uncle Ike, whose eager glance age had not yet dimmed, putting his hand on his forehead, looked up the ravine and slowly said:

"Them's the bars I seen t'other day; they're out takin' a drink."

"Oh, boys, let's go back; they'll eat us," cried one of the boys, as he shuddered with fright.

Uncle Ike chuckled, and, drawing a terrible looking hunting knife, he assured them that there was no danger. They were several hundred feet above the bears, and they were going on beyond where they were. The boys, however, had their eyes open, and kept a sharp lookout on all sides. They did not want to be surprised.

After descending the mountain a half mile farther they came to immense ledges of rocks, broken and tumbled about in irregular and promiscuous confusion, which lay exposed to the rays of the sun, and with only here and there a stunted forest tree.

Taking something from his pocket and placing it in his mouth, Uncle Ike gave a sharp, shrill whistle, and looked around him.

"There goes a reptile," he said, starting for a broad, flat rock, on which the snake had been sunning himself and having a quiet snooze; but Ike's alarm had awakened his snakeship, and it darted in an opposite direction to escape.

But the old man was after it, with a long stick in his hand that had two short, sharp pointed prongs at the lower end. When he caught up to the snake he thrust the prongs behind its head, and impaled it to the ground. It was a powerful one, but the old man held it down, while its body and tail writhed around the stick. He stooped over, seized it back of the head with his left hand and held it firmly, while with his right he took a small pair of nippers and performed a rapid dental operation by pulling out its poisonous fangs. He opened the lid of his basket, threw the snake in, and fastened the top.

"Waal, boys, that's snake number one. I reckon we're a-goin' to have luck to-day—it's jes' the day, shiny enough fur the reptiles to be out. But I want ter warn ye whar ye step. No tellin' whar they're lyin', and I wouldn't have one uv yer git bit fur th' world."

• Ike's admonition was not needed to spur the boys to watchfulness. The chase Ike had just given and the method of capture was new to them; in fact, somewhat startling. It is not easy, even for fearless, dare-devil boys, to overcome the common dread that belongs to the race of the venomous crawling part of creation.

"The reason I warn ye particularly, boys, is 'cause some on 'em is sheddin' thar skin, an' they're more'n half blind. The film uv th' old skin makes 'em so. Then they lay mighty stupid—half dead; but ef ye step on 'em, they're awake quick enough, I kin tell ye, an' strike right an' left. A rattlesnake is an honorable enemy when he's in his true skin. He gives ye warning that he means ter fight. Ye kin tell whar he is, an' get ready yerself."

"What makes them run away from a whistle?" inquired Roland.

"Waal, ye see thar's a kind uv hawk what flies around whar rattlesnakes live, and lives on their flesh. When the bird sees a snake he swoops around, utterin' a sharp whistle like; this skeers the snake and starts him off on a direct line, an' the bird pounces down an' nabs him by



the neck, and that's the last uv the snake. That's how I learned to catch 'em, by noticin' these birds."

The boys were so much interested in the art of capturing a rattlesnake, they wanted to try for themselves, so Uncle Ike consumed some time cutting and preparing some long sticks with sharp prongs on the dower ends. When ready they shouldered arms and advanced in search of the enemy.

Dangerous as the sport was, it afforded a good deal of amusement to the old man and no little excitement to the boys. Quite a number had been captured and placed in the basket, when, the game becoming scarce, they continued to descend still deeper the steep sides of the ravine, where the dense growth of trees shut out the rays of the sun and enveloped all in semi-darkness.

"Oh, Uncle Ike, here's a big cave right under the mountain. How dark it is in there!"

"That is what the old hunters used to call Bear Cave. Many's the time I've chased my game in thar when I had missed my aim, and it had got away from me. I tell yer it tried a man's grit ter follow a bear or a wolf in thar, but I've done it."

"Do you think there are any in there now?" nervously questioned one of his listeners.

"Oh, no; what bears an' other wild animals there is in these parts keep lower down the ravine," and he went searching around for some dry pine knots along some old detaying timber.

In a few moments he returned, bent down, and ignited the knots.

"What are you going to do, Uncle Ike?" asked Roland.

"Go into the cave."

Uncle Ike took the lead; next came Roland and the rest of the boys. They clambered over some fallen rocks that had narrowed the entrance, and kept on till they lost sight of the mouth of the cave. The roof continued to become higher and higher the further they advanced, till at length they stood in a vast auditorium hewed out by nature's hand. The oozing water drops upon which the lights shone, glistened and glared like thousands of eyes, the stalactites and stalagmites hung suspended from the roof, some resembling chandeliers, others the ornate work in the interior of a Gothic church edifice.

The boys were wrapped in wonder. They advanced till they came to a bench of rock on the left, when Roland, who was all eyes, exclaimed:

"Uncle Ike, what is that over there?" pointing in the direction. The old man went nearer, and getting on the bench, he rolled down something that rattled like bones.

"A bunch of the reptiles' skeletons," he coolly remarked. But it made the shivers come over the boys.

"Hello! What's that?" whispered Roland, whose quick ear detected an ominous sound.

"That's one uv 'em," said Ike, starting in the direction of the rattle, guided by the light of his torch, but something caught the old man's eye that made him suddenly halt. Confronting him was a snake of huge proportions, the like of which he had never seen before. On his approach it had coiled itself ready to spring, with its head erect and fierce eyes glaring at him. As quick as thought Ike gave a shrill whistle, and the snake uncoiled itself to crawl away—at least so thought Ike; but the reptile kept

up an incessant rattle that resounded through the cave like the quick reveille to awake an army, or the rattle of drums calling "to arms."

The alarm of the king rattlesnake was followed by a response from every quarter of the cave.

There was a rattling, hissing sound, which increased every moment.

The hair stood out in tangent lines on the heads of the boys—goose-pimples gathered on their skins as they listened.

"Oh, look at them coming," breathed out Roland.

Sure enough, the mottled reptiles came crawling out of every crevice by the hundred, and gliding down to where their king was giving the alarm, and they, too, joined in the din, angered by the invasion of an enemy.

"Boys, let's git out as soon as we kin. There's no use fightin' 'em; they're too many for us. Now, follow me."

They retreated a few yards, but the king snake glided right across their pathway, surrounded by his bodyguard.

"They mean to fight us," half muttered the old man to himself. "Well, it's life or death fur us, so here goes," and raising his stout green stick that he used to catch with, he swung it in the air, and down it came upon the body of the monster, inflicting a serious wound.

Ike intended the blow for the head, but the snake was too quick for him. The latter, however, infuriated by its wound, sprang into the air, and planted its deadly fangs into the left hand of Ike, between the thumb and forefinger. He pulled out his hunting knife, and by a terrific blow severed the head of the snake from the body.

The blood spurted all over him.

Ike took a bottle of whisky from his pocket and drank a very heavy draught—then, sucking the wound, he hastily covered it with some plant leaves he had with him and wrapped a bandage about it.

The battle raged furiously for some time along the line of retreat, till the party reached the narrowing point of the cave, where the snakes did not form in such large numbers. Those that did show themselves were quickly dispatched by the sturdy blows of the old hunter, and the party quickly emerged from the cave into daylight, more dead than alive. They had had a frightful encounter, with the burden of the fight falling upon Uncle Ike. He was covered with blood from head to foot, and his face and body swollen into a puff. The poison was doing its work. Once it reached the heart Uncle Ike would be a dead man. He took out the whisky bottle and emptied it of its contents in one continuous swallow; he applied some more plants to the wound on the hand—a remedy he had learned from the Indians—and fell in a drunken stupor upon the bank. They eagerly watched every sign of returning consciousness in Ike, who had passed the crisis favorably, as he had done many a time before, for he had often been bitten by his own carelessness, and when sufficiently recovered to walk, they slowly wended their way home through the darkness. It was after midnight when they reached there. Dear old Uncle Ike has gone to his long home—stung by the universal destroyer, Death—but the writer of this sketch still recalls with horror his share in that terrible combat, in a den of rattlesnakes.



## GOOD READING

A Phelps County farmer has bought 1,900 goats in New Mexico. The animals will be used in killing out sprouts on the owner's land near Rolla. Experience has taught farmers that it takes a goat and a half to the acre to clean up the ground properly, according to the Linneus, Wyo., Bulletin.

Barney Kelly, Chief of Police of Kokomo, Ind., has explained why a sightly sideboard of walnut stands unused in a woodshed. When he was a stage carpenter in Boston he spent his idle hours at a crematory and learned that the wood of caskets was stored in rooms above. He built the sideboard from the caskets and shipped it to Kokomo. When the woman folks learned its history they banished it to the woodshed.

Like a chapter from an old-fashioned novel reads the story unearthed by Sarrogate Stratton, of Binghamton, N. Y., in the contest over the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Orrin Beckwith. This aged couple, found dead from exposure in their cottage last winter, supposedly left no estate. The surrogate's court disposed of their little place, but when a contractor proceeded to tear it down he found in the walls forty packages, each containing \$1,000.

Ed Rosenthal, of Topeka, Kan., an official of the Paragon Film Company, was instantly killed at Texas, Wis., while taking moving pictures. A boulder thrown by a blast which he was photographing, crushed his skull. While photographers from the same company were taking pictures of water sports at Rothschild, the railing of a bridge broke and several men were thrown into the water. They were rescued with difficulty.

Arthur Gentsch, a driver, descended 212 feet in Long Island Sound, establishing, it is said, a new record in deep-sea diving. The apparatus in which Gentsch ventured to depths before unexplored is an ingeniously constructed submarine vessel. It is built entirely of metal, and the diver is bolted and screwed securely inside. The utmost depths hitherto attained with safety by divers had been 100 feet. At that depth, it is said, no man ever has been able to remain for more than fifteen minutes because of the water pressure from above.

After living for more than twenty-five years alone in a lone apartment in great poverty, Mrs. Harriet Drummond, of West Rutherford, N. J., who died a few months ago at the age of 70, has left at least \$100,000. In her will she has bequeathed about \$7,500 to two churches here to be used for general church work, to Douglas Hood of Melrose Abbey, Scotland, \$1,500, and to her mother, Mrs. Maria Hood, \$500. The Rutherford Baptist Church gets \$200 and the First Presbyterian Church the residue of the estate, \$200 of which is to go to the Sunday school and \$1,000 to missionary purposes.

The English and Scotch universities opened their fall terms recently with greatly reduced attendance. Cambridge University had only 1,500 students (3,500 last year), many of those at the institution last year having joined the army. The other seats of learning have lost in about the same proportion. Leeds University has sent more than 150 of its professors and students to the war. The German Rhodes scholars and other German and Austrian students who have been attending English universities in large numbers are all absent this year, a majority of them being with their armies. Edinburgh University's asking all its German professors and lecturers to resign is much commented on. The medical department alone has lost 450 students. Pembroke College, Cambridge University, called the sportsman's college, sent 200 of its 270 students into the army.

Workers in the sand pits near Wellington, Col., have been twice driven from their work in two days by swarms of winged ants. The insects have a bite that is almost as poisonous as the sting of bees. They have attacked men and horses alike, causing great lumps and swellings upon the men and driving the horses nearly frantic. These flying ants are the hatch of this year. When they attain maturity, they are equipped with wings, and during the hottest days come to the surface of the sand pits, where many of them fly away. Some are caught by the older workers in the anthills and they are shorn of their wings and carried back into the galleries, to become industrious members of the community. The swarms usually come out early in July, but this year they have been delayed by wet weather. Twice teams have run away from the sand, where the insects were emerging in clouds. Men have had to take gunny sacks and whip into the swarms to drive them away. They have killed millions of them in this manner.

Strange are the ways of fate, and stranger yet the paths which lead to fortune, through a forgotten favor. R. Maxwell Ward, of Columbia Cross Roads, Pa., is now worth \$100,000 for the simple reason that he kept a receipt for \$23.75, representing the amount of money he spent years ago to befriend a penniless man. In 1904 Ward was a lineman in Sioux City, Iowa. One morning in that city Ward and a companion, Charles Russell, were asked by a stranger for the price of a meal. Ward bought him a breakfast and later, when the unknown became seriously ill, took him to a hotel and agreed to pay his expenses. After the stranger recovered Ward paid the hotel bill, amounting to \$14.75, and a doctor's bill for \$9. Though he kept the receipts he soon forgot about the incident. When Ward received word that the man, who was Oscar J. Wanderleu, was dead in Montana, and had left him \$40,000, he had no trouble in identifying himself by means of the receipts. Ward receives \$7,500 in cash, and \$3,000 each year for ten years. He says he has climbed his last telephone pole.



## ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

### DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS LOADED.

Warren Rhoads, a farmer of Jacksonwald, Pa., says hereafter he will carefully examine would-be-empty whisky barrels before he tries to alter the bungholes. He came to this conclusion after one exploded when he attempted to enlarge the bunghole with a red-hot poker. Most of his hair was burned off and many cuts and bruises resulted. Investigation proved that the barrel had been recently emptied, was still wet, and the red-hot iron formed so much gas inside that it burst with a crash.

### DISCOVERS RARE PLUM TREE.

A plum tree believed to be the only one of its kind in the United States and which yields a fruit unsurpassed, it is declared, by any of the products of the orchards of California or Oregon, has been growing at the Roman Catholic Indian mission at Assinins, Baraga County, Mich., for many years and each season has borne abundantly. Its existence has become known to the general public only recently.

The tree is believed to be of European origin and is thought to have been planted by Bishop Baraga, a pioneer prelate of upper Michigan and founder of the Assinins mission.

It was discovered recently by Leo M. Geismar, farm expert for Houghton County. The agriculturist has been unable to identify the species, but is so enthusiastic he is arranging to perpetuate the tree.

### BIG CROP OF TURKEYS.

"While prolonged drought has adversely affected many crops, it has tended to keep the young turkeys' feet dry, thereby assuring a large and fine crop of turkeys for Thanksgiving," says Charlotte R. Bangs. "It's too early to predict exact prices, but if plentifulness means cheapness, then they should be very cheap this year. There is a likelihood, however, that the farmer will hold on for a good price. It is believed that if he does, the best grades will bring 22 to 23 cents wholesale, which would mean at least 25 to 28 cents at retail.

Missouri sends the most turkeys to market, with Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, Maryland and Tennessee prominent. New York State has only a very moderate supply as compared with other States, and could never supply the demand for Manhattan alone.

"There is no difficulty in securing imported game. Scotch grouse are and will be \$3.50 to \$4 a pair, and English plover \$5 to \$6 a pair. Venison is excellent this season and will not be expensive."

### HIS POCKET WIRELESS.

The German Government has offered a large sum to Prof. Domenico Argentieri of Aquila for his pocket system of radiotelegraphy.

Prof. Argentieri has patriotically refused the offer, pre-

ferring to place the invention at the service of his own Government. He has satisfactorily carried out experiments before an Italian commission, and he is coming here to lecture on his invention.

The apparatus costs about \$3. It is capable of intercepting messages from the Eiffel Tower, 730 miles from Aquila. In speaking of Prof. Argentieri's invention a few days ago Father Alfani, Director of the Florence Observatory, related after the declaration of war the Italian Government forced all private wireless stations, including that of the Florence Observatory, to discontinue operations. The next day Father Alfani obtained from Prof. Argentieri copies of official wireless messages which the Professor had been able to intercept without a wireless installation.

There were many ways to do this, Father Alfani explained. One of the most simple was the very elemental expedient of sticking two steel needles into a potato.

### A DEADLY GAS SHELL.

Is the German army using shells which, when they burst, liberate gases that kill men?

For more than five years past Germany has been experimenting with guns and projectiles adapted for the use of explosives that cannot be safely placed in the ordinary shell. On Aug. 24, 1909, the United States Patent Office issued letters patent to Karl Wieser of Bredeneu-am-Ruhr for a projectile the diameter of which is greater than the bore of the gun which fires it. The shell, in the Wieser patent, was to be attached loosely to a steel shaft, then the shaft was to be fired, with the shell on the forward end of it. Attached to the muzzle of the gun was a weight so arranged that when the shaft was projected out of the barrel it engaged stops which checked the flight of the shaft and so detached it from the flying shell.

Wieser transferred his patent right to the Krupp Company, and came back with an application for a new patent (granted Sept. 12, 1911) for a simpler shaft. Evidently the Krupps saw enough merit in the diabolical contrivance to urge the inventor to perfect it.

A handful of gun-cotton placed in a thin-walled shell of the Wieser type with forty, fifty or more pounds of cyanide of potassium will scatter the cyanide so thoroughly that when the day's work of destruction is over there is nothing to show how the dead men met their end.

Gases could be generated in the shell in many ways. When an acid comes into contact with cyanides the reaction produces prussic acid gas, probably the most dangerous gas generally known.

One brick—the commercial form in which cyanide is handled—with a teacupful of vinegar, would make enough gas, if properly dispersed, to suffocate as many men as could be crowded into Madison Square Garden, especially if the chemicals were shattered, as they would be by the bursting of a charge of high explosive.



## IMITATION GOLD TEETH.



Gold plated tooth, shape made so that it will fit any tooth. Price, 5c., postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

## A NEW SQUIRT BADGE.

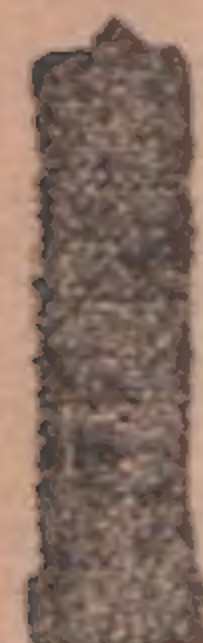


Great fun for the million! Wear it in your buttonhole and then press the bulb and watch the other fellow run.

Price, 14c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St. New York City.

## POCKET SAVINGS BANK.



A perfect little bank, handsomely nickel plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## NEW SURPRISE NOVELTY.



Foxy Grandpa, Mr. Peewee and other comical faces artistically colored, to which is attached a long rubber tube, connected with a rubber ball, which can be filled with water, the rubber ball being carried in the pocket, a slight pressure on the bulb causes a long stream, the result can easily be seen.

Price, 15c.,

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C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

## MYSTERIOUS SKULL.



Shines in the dark. The most frightful ghost ever shown. A more startling effect could not be found. Not only will it afford tremendous amusement, but it is guaranteed to scare away burglars, bill collectors, and book agents. It cannot get out of order and can be used repeatedly. Price, 4x5 inches, 15c.; by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



**TRICK PUZZLE PURSE.**—The first attempt usually made to open it, is to press down the little knob in the centre of purse, when a small needle runs out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. You can open it before their eyes and still

they will be unable to open it. Price by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

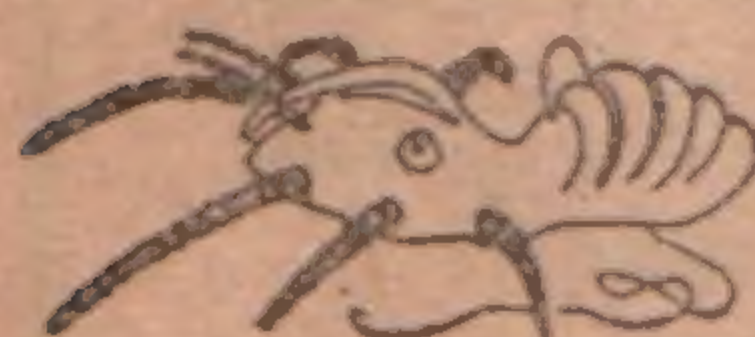
## JUMPING JACK PENCIL.



This pencil is made up in handsome style and looks so inviting that every one will want to look at it. The natural thing to do is to write with it, and just as soon as your friend tries to write, the entire inside of the pencil flies back like a jumping jack, and "Mr. Noisy" will be frightened stiff. It is one of our best pencil tricks and you will have a hard job trying to keep it. Your friends will try to take it from you. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

## THE HIDEOUS SPIDER.

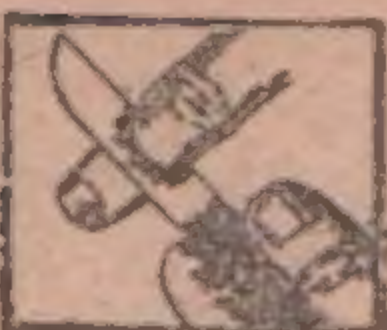


Fun for everybody with one of these handsome brutes. His body is 3 inches long, beautifully enamelled green, with white ridges, yellow speckles, bulging eyes, and a big red mouth. He is armed with six legs and two upright feelers, made of flexible spiral springs. A dark, invisible thread attached to his body lets you shake him in the air before your friends' eyes, when the legs wiggle in a most natural, lifelike manner. Guaranteed to make any lady howl and to scare the bravest hero on earth out of his boots.

Price by mail, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## JAPANESE TRICK KNIFE.



You can show the knife and instantly draw it across your finger, apparently cutting deep into the flesh. The red blood appears on the blade of the knife, giving a startling effect to the spectators. The knife is removed and the finger is found in good condition. Quite an effective illusion. Price 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

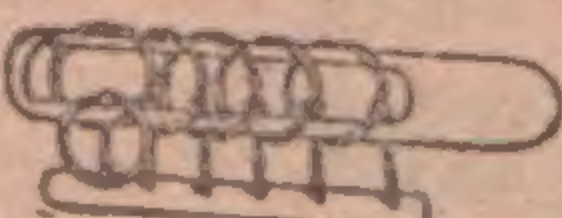
## PICK-ME-OUT PUZZLE.



The head is finished in black japan, and in the mouth is a highly polished steel ball. The puzzle is to pick out the ball. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH  
883 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

## CHINESE RING PUZZLE.



Here is a genuine "corker." The object is to remove the handle from the rings. Made of polished brass and each one in a box. The bar can be taken out and replaced in less than five minutes without bending the rings or bar, when you know how to do the trick. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

## RISEING PENCIL.



The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows it top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power over innate objects. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used. Price, 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



## THE PRINCESS OF YOGI CARD TRICK.

Four cards are held in the form of a fan and a spectator is requested to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now shuffled and one is openly taken away and placed in his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

## THE FRIGHTFUL RATTLESNAKE!



To all appearance it is a harmless piece of coiled paper with a mouth-piece attachment, but upon placing it to one's mouth, and blowing into the tube, an imitation snake over two feet in length springs out of the roll like a flash of lightning, producing a whistling, fluttering sound that would frighten a wild Indian. We guarantee our rattlesnake not to bite, but would not advise you to play the joke on timid women or delicate children. Each snake packed in a box. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

## RUBBER TACKS.



They come six in a box. A wonderful imitation of the real tack. Made of rubber. The box in which they come is the ordinary tack box. This is a great parlor entertainer and you can play a lot of tricks with the tacks. Place them in the palm of your hand, point upward. Then slap the other hand over the tacks and it will seem as if you are committing suicide. Or you can show the tacks and then put them in your mouth and chew them, making believe you have swallowed them. Your friends will think you are a magician. Then, again, you can exhibit the tacks and then quickly push one in your cheek or somebody else's cheek and they will shriek with fear. Absolutely harmless and a very practical and funny joke. Price by mail, 10c. a box of 6 tacks; 3 for 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

## LOTS OF FUN

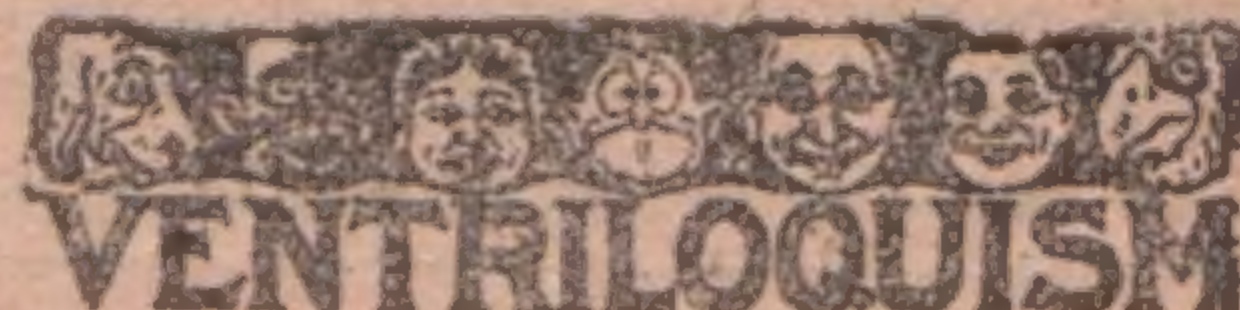


## Ventriloquist Double Throat

Fits roof of mouth; always invisible; greatest thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary; and imitate birds and beasts of the field and forest. Loads of fun. Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Send a dime and a 2-cent stamp for one dozen.

DOUBLE THROAT CO., Dept. K, Frenchtown, N. J.

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**BOYS, GIRLS,** make easy money. Write BAUGH COMPANY, Springfield, Mo.

## ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/2 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

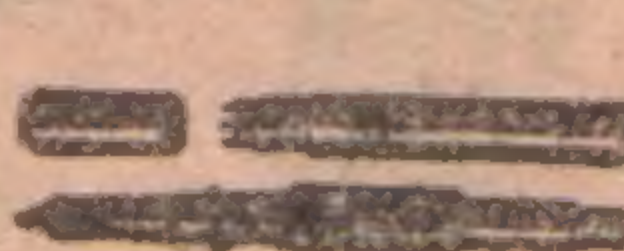
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**APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.**—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c.

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## AUTOMATIC COPYING PENCIL.



The importance of carrying a good reliable pencil need not be dwelt upon here. It is an absolute necessity with us all. The holder of this pencil is beautifully nickel-plated with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry.

Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid.

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## MAGIC MIRROR

Fat and Lean Funny Faces



By looking in these mirrors upright your features become narrow and elongated. Look into it sideways and your phiz broadens out in the most comical manner. Size 3 1/2 x 2 1/4 inches, in a handsome imitation morocco case.

Price 10 cents each, postpaid

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1815 Centre St.,  
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#### LAUGHING CAMERA.

Everybody grotesquely photographed; stout people look thin, and vice versa.

Price, 25c. postpaid.  
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#### ALUMINUM DRINKING CUPS.



These handsome little cups are very handy in size, do not leak, and are Satin finished. When compressed, can be carried in the vest pocket. They hold a good quantity of liquid, and are very strong, light, yet durable. Price, 14c. each, postpaid.

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#### FALSE NOSES.



Change your face! Have a barrel of fun! They are life-like reproductions of funny noses, made of shaped cloth, waxed, and colored. When placed over your nose, they remain on securely, and only a close inspection reveals their false character. All shapes, such as pugs, hooks, short-horn lemons, and rum blossoms. Better than a false face. Can be carried in the vest pocket.

Price, by mail, 10c. each.

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**THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.**—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes first the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great climax; highly recommended. Price, 10c.

**FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.**

#### THE HELLO PUZZLE



Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to discover the trick, unless you know how it is done. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.  
**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

#### FOUR WEEKS (A LOUD BOOK).



Has the absolute and exact shape of a book in cloth. Upon the opening of the book, after having it set up according to directions furnished, a loud report similar to that of a pistol-shot will be heard, much to the amazement and surprise of the victim. Caps not mailable; can be bought at any toy store. Price, 65c. by mail, postpaid.  
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#### THE BUCULO CIGAR.



The most remarkable trick-cigar in the world. It smokes without tobacco, and never gets smaller. Anyone can have a world of fun with it, especially if you smoke it in the presence of a person who dislikes the odor of tobacco. It looks exactly like a fine perfect, and the smoke is so real that it is bound to deceive the closest observer.

Price, 12c. each, postpaid.

**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

#### IMITATION CIGAR BUTT.



It is made of a composition, exactly resembling a lighted cigar. The white ashes at the end and the imitation of tobacco-leaf being perfect. You can carelessly place it on top of the tablecloth or any other expensive piece of furniture, and await the result. After they see the joke everybody will have a good laugh. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

#### THE CROWN STYLO.



Made of aluminum, satin finish, guaranteed not to leak. This stylographic ink pen-cil is made on a new plan. It cannot corrode and will outlast and outclass any similar pencil on the market. It is a splendid writer, and is easily kept in order. Each one packed with a filler, and a clip to hold it in your vest pocket.

Price, 25c. each, postpaid.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

#### MAGIC PUZZLE KEYS.



Two keys interlocked in such a manner it seems impossible to separate them, but when learned it is easily done.

Price, 6c., postpaid.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

#### PIN MOUSE.



It is made of cast metal and has the exact color, shape and size of a live mouse. Pinned on your or somebody else's clothes, will have a startling effect upon the spectators. The screaming fun had by this little novelty, especially in the presence of ladies, is more than can be imagined. If a cat happens to be there, there's no other fun to be compared with it.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

**FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.**

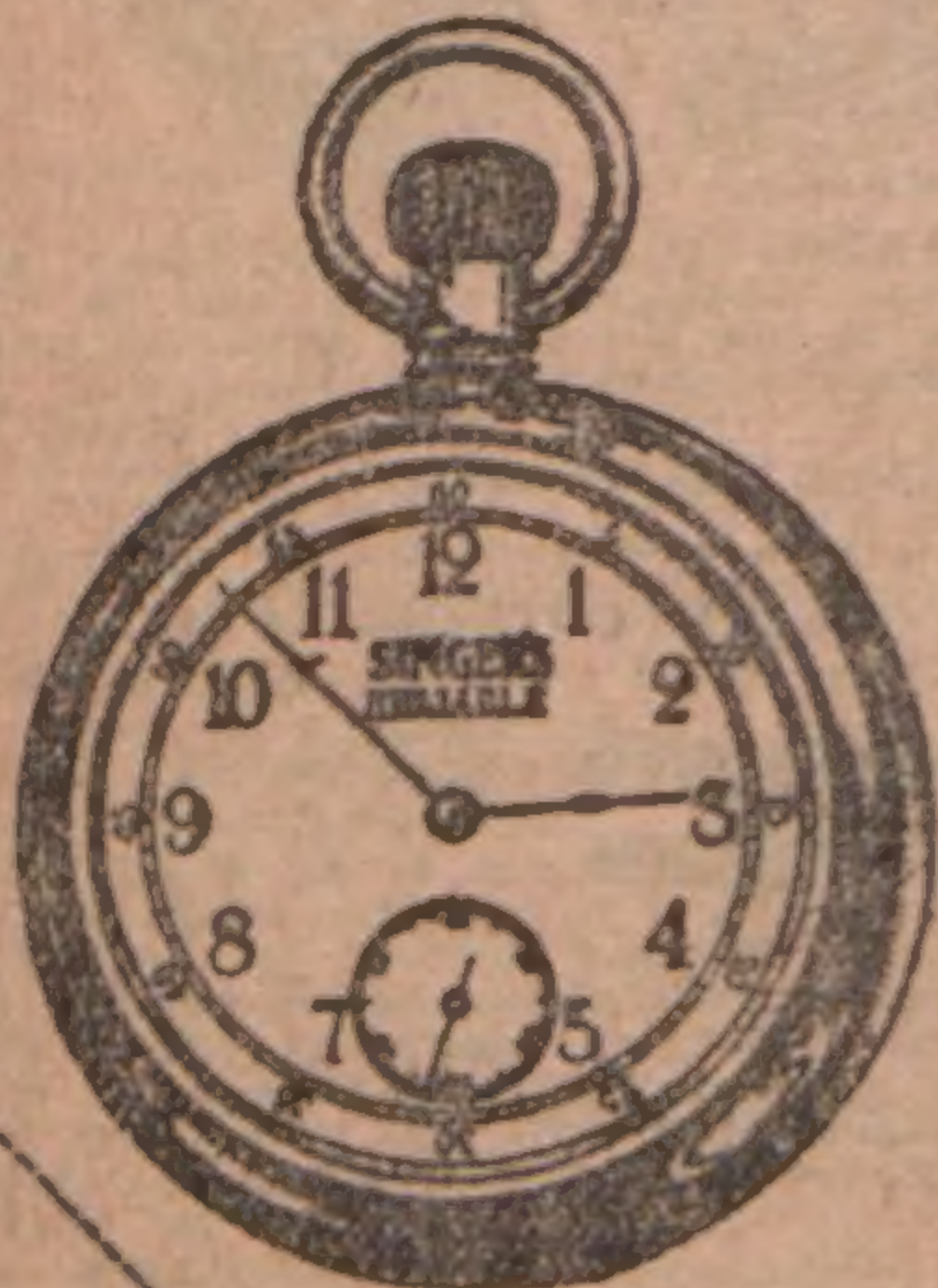
#### NORWEGIAN MOUSE.



A very large gray mouse, measuring 3 inches from tip of nose to end of tail. The body of mouse is hollow. Place your first finger in his body, and then by moving your finger up and down, the mouse appears to be running up your sleeve. Enter a room where there are ladies, with the mouse running up your sleeve, and you will see a rapid scattering of the fair sex. Many practical jokes can be perpetrated with this small rodent.

Price, 16c.; 3 for 25c. mailed, postpaid.

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No. 2. **HOW TO DO TRICKS.**—The great book of magic and card tricks, containing full instruction on all the leading card tricks of the day, also the most popular magical illusions as performed by our leading magicians; every boy should obtain a copy of this book.

No. 3. **HOW TO FLIRT.**—The arts and wiles of flirtation are fully explained by this little book. Besides the various methods of handkerchief, fan, glove, parasol, window and hat flirtation, it contains a full list of the language and sentiment of flowers.

No. 4. **HOW TO DANCE** is the title of this little book. It contains full instructions in the art of dancing, etiquette in the ballroom and at parties, how to dress, and full directions for calling off in all popular square dances.

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No. 6. **HOW TO BECOME AN ATHLETE.**—Giving full instruction for the use of dumb-bells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, horizontal bars and various other methods of developing a good, healthy muscle; containing over sixty illustrations.

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No. 12. **HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO LADIES.**—Giving complete instructions for writing letters to ladies on all subjects; also letters of introduction, notes and requests.

No. 13. **HOW TO DO IT; OR, BOOK OF**

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No. 30. **HOW TO COOK.**—One of the most instructive books on cooking ever published. It contains recipes for cooking meats, fish, game, and oysters; also pies, puddings, cakes and all kinds of pastry, and a grand collection of recipes.

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No. 43. **HOW TO BECOME A MAGICIAN.**—Containing the grandest assortment of magical illusions ever placed before the public. Also tricks with cards, incantations, etc.

No. 44. **HOW TO WRITE IN AN ALBUM.**—A grand collection of Album Verses suitable for any time and occasion; embracing Lines of Love, Affection, Sentiment, Humor, Respect, and Condolence; also Verses Suitable for Valentines and Weddings.

No. 45. **THE BOYS OF NEW YORK MINSTREL GUIDE AND JOKE BOOK.**—Something new and very instructive. Every boy should obtain this book, as it contains full instructions for organizing an amateur minstrel troupe.

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